

Attachment B, pages 201-303

From: Myla Williams
To: [Marcolin, John](#)
Subject: Comments on Equity One Sketch Plan for Westbard Redevelopment
Date: Monday, August 22, 2016 7:53:07 AM

Dear Mr. Marcolin,

In mid-2015 you and I spoke by email and exchanged a few emails concerning the Westbard Sector Plan. As I expressed to you at the time, my primary concern was the excessive building height and density being contemplated. I am extremely dismayed and disappointed that since then, the way has been paved for Equity One to build high-rises on Westbard Avenue.

I continue to follow the process closely and will be attending the Aug. 22 meeting of the Development Review Committee.

I have the following comments on Equity One's sketch plan:

1. Build-out and pace of growth: In your 6/30/15 email reply to my major concerns about density and building height in the Westwood redevelopment, you tried to allay my concerns by telling me that "Most Sector Plans realize between 50-75% of planned residential density over the 20-25 year life of the Plan." Yet Equity One's sketch plan proposes maximum build-out allowed under the Sector Plan approved by the Council, in terms of density as well as building height, as compensation for amenities included in their plan. Yet these amenities were always part of the plan, according to the public meetings held by the Planning Commission and Equity One. So why would you then allow 100% build-out immediately? If the current sketch plan is approved, the Westbard Sector Plan would in all likelihood realize 100% (not 50-75%) of planned density upon Equity One's within one year of its completion of its redevelopment project (as opposed to by 20-25 years from now). The Planning Commission and County Council should scale back the density and building heights, for a more gradual pace of growth in density, consistent with what you originally anticipated and described to me based on the Planning Commission's experience elsewhere in the County.

2. "Bonus" building heights: Attendees at Equity One's neighborhood meeting on the sketch plan were stunned to learn that Equity One is seeking building heights exceeding the maximums stated in the Sector Plan, on the grounds that additional stories (and the resulting higher density) are to compensate the developer for allocating 15% to low income housing. Such an incentive for this project is founded on greed, since it isn't needed for this project to be highly profitable for Equity One. The neighboring communities are already dismayed at the building heights without this "bonus" for Equity One. The concept of additional stories to compensate the developer for low income housing should be eliminated from the plan.

3. Usable (as opposed to drive-by visual) public green space: The planned "civic green" and "neighborhood park" in the "Westwood I" site each need to be significantly larger than Equity One's proposed size of 1/3 of an acre each, given the significant increase in density approved by the County Council in the Sector Plan and proposed in Equity One's sketch plan. 1/3 of an acre would not allow for use as a civic green or a neighborhood park, and those areas would therefore not adequately serve the needs of the future residents and retail customers of Westwood redevelopment. Proximity to the Crescent Trail does not justify such a token approach to green space in the sketch plan, as the uses are very different: gathering/sitting vs. walking/biking. At public meetings both the Planning Commission and Equity One led the

neighboring communities to believe that public green space, including a “town square” - like space for gathering and sitting, would be part of the Sector Plan and redevelopment. Note also that Equity One’s sketch plan includes “numerous private open spaces associated with the townhouse developments” as part of the green space. Being private, these are inaccessible to the neighboring communities. As such, these should not “count” as green space in the redevelopment of the Westbard Sector.

4. Daylighting of Willett Branch: The public was assured by the Planning Commission that daylighting of the Willett Branch would be one of the amenities included in the redevelopment of the Westbard Sector. Yet Equity One is taking no responsibility for this in its sketch plan, and is instead showing a new parking garage behind the Westwood Towers squarely in the 100 foot stream buffer. Any new structures in the buffer will seriously impair the stream and detract from what was to be green space. No waivers should be allowed for new buildings in the buffer. The Sector Plan recommends that a cemetery delineation be done behind the Westwood Towers before any development is approved. As there is overwhelming evidence of an African American cemetery dating to the late 1800s, this should be done so that the new park can honor these early residents. Equity One should be required to embrace a new park for the Willett Branch as well as and our community’s important local history.

5. Citgo station: From the sketch plan it appears that Equity One plans to eliminate both Citgo gas stations. Local residents made it clear at every public meeting that they wanted at least one of those gas stations to remain, and the County Council supported this. Equity One should be required to abide by this community priority.

6. Parking adequacy and access/flow: Given that parking for retail customers is moving from the existing surface lot to all underground, the underground garage needs to be large enough to accommodate the number and size of vehicles typically parked in the existing surface lot at peak usage - i.e., on a sunny weekend day or on the eve of a major holiday. This is crucial, given that there won’t be many options for remote parking, and even if there were, a Giant grocery store will continue to be the anchor store in the redeveloped retail area, and close proximity to parking is a necessity for transporting groceries to one’s car. Also, to avoid traffic jams on Westbard Ave. there should be multiple entries to underground parking for retail customers, and these entries should be located such that no queuing for them accumulates on Westbard Ave.

Sincerely,

Myla Williams
6302 Newburn Dr.
Bethesda
301-229-2492 (H)
301-717-3304 (C)

From: Susan Robinson <surob828@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 23, 2016 6:21 AM
To: planning@springfield20816.com
Subject: Equity One Sketch Plan

Dear Mr. Marcolin,

Now that Equity One has made their Sketch Plan public, I have the following concerns:

The Willett Branch is not indicated on the plan. The Sector Plan clearly states that the new Willett Branch Stream Valley Park is a core element of the Westbard Sector. Equity One must be required to address it in their design. To leave it out would compromise the whole project. Further, Equity One's commitment to excellent design should embrace the creek rather than turn its back on this unique feature of the Sector.

The Sketch Plan shows a new parking garage behind the Westwood Towers squarely in the 100 foot stream buffer. Any new structures in the buffer will seriously impair the stream and detract from the continuity of the new park. No waivers should be allowed for new buildings in the buffer.

The Sector Plan recommends that a cemetery delineation is done behind the Westwood Towers before any development is approved. As there is overwhelming evidence of an African American cemetery dating to the late 1800s, this should be done so that the new park can honor these early residents.

With the support of a strong sketch plan, the Willett Branch has the potential to be a show place for the County and a world class amenity to be enjoyed by everyone. Please support our community by requiring Equity One to create a sketch plan that embraces the new park and our local history.

Susan Robinson
4908 Baltan Road
Bethesda, MD 20816

From: endjed2 <endjed2@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 23, 2016 8:13 AM
To: planning@springfield20816.com; +john.marcolin@montgomeryplanning.org
Subject: Help the Naturalized Willett become a Reality

Dear Mr. Marcolin,

When are the leaders in Montgomery County going to listen to their constituents? Who is getting something from these greedy developers? We want to live in an area with green space and beauty, not concrete and high-rise buildings? If we wanted to live like that, we would have chosen downtown DC or Ballston.

The Willett Branch is not indicated on the plan. The Sector Plan clearly states that the new Willett Branch Stream Valley Park is a core element of the Westbard Sector. EquityOne must be required to address it in their design. To leave it out would compromise the whole project. EO should embrace the creek rather than turn its back on this unique feature of the Sector.

The Sketch Plan shows a new parking garage behind the Westwood Towers squarely in the 100 foot stream buffer. Any new structures in the buffer will seriously impair the stream and detract from the continuity of the new park. No waivers should be allowed for new buildings in the buffer.

The Sector Plan recommends that a cemetery delineation is done behind the Westwood Towers before any development is approved. As there is overwhelming evidence of an African American cemetery dating to the late 1800s, this should be done so that the new park can honor these early residents.

The Willett Branch has the potential to be a show place for the County and a world class amenity for all. Please support our community by requiring EquityOne to create a sketch plan that embraces the new park and our local history.

These comments do not constitute acquiescence to or acceptance of the Sketch Plan.

Elizabeth and Edwin Dietel
5109 Duvall Drive
Bethesda 20816

MCP-Chair

From: John Gill <johngill@hagill.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 23, 2016 8:46 AM
To: Marcolin, John; MCP-Chair
Subject: Willet Branch.

Dear Planning Staff and Board,

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Please support our community by requiring Equity One to create a sketch plan that embraces the new park and our local history.

John Gill
Sumner

From: phinderling@comcast.net
Sent: Tuesday, August 23, 2016 8:49 AM
To: MCP-Chair
Subject: Comments on EquityOne Sketch Plan

Dear Chairman Casey Anderson,

Even though the EquityOne Sketch Plan for the Westwood Shopping Center, and its surroundings, is now filed, please know that the people most affected by the project—the friends and neighbors who live in the area—do NOT support this massive re-development and urbanization project. We requested an updated shopping center, with a reasonable amount of new density (580 new units). We will continue to oppose this out-sized project as it is unreasonable for our suburban community.

In the meantime, here are my initial comments on the Sketch Plan application document:

-The EquityOne Massing Diagram is massive, blocky and unattractive. Even though the residents were told, repeatedly, by you, our MoCo government officials, that Sector Plans are never fully built-out ... that is exactly what is on-tap here.

-The Area Dedicated to Public Use is decreasing dramatically, according to the Sketch Plan's own data. According to page 3 of the Sketch Plan application, the public use area is decreasing from 3.05 acres to 1.69 acres, essentially halving the public use space, while, at the same time, pushing density ever skyward. Something is wrong with this picture. The proposed public use area is excruciatingly tiny and wholly inadequate for the density which is proposed.

Mr. Brown thinks the Sketch Plan will "greatly enhance the Westbard area of the County." We disagree. We did not ask that our suburban community be urbanized in favor of a New York developer.

These are my initial comments only; I will have more comments as the process unfolds and our experts review the plan.

Regards,

5509 Chesterbrook Rd
Bethesda, MD 20816

From: Sharon O'Brien <obriens@visi.org>
Sent: Tuesday, August 23, 2016 9:27 AM
To: MCP-Chair
Subject: Comments on EquityOne Sketch Plan

Dear Chairman Casey Anderson,

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These are my initial comments only; I will have more comments as the process unfolds and our experts review the plan.

Regards,
Sharon O'Brien
5615 Lamar Rd
Bethesda, MD 20816

From: Lynn Gallagher <lynn.t.gallagher@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 23, 2016 11:40 AM
To: MCP-Chair
Subject: Comments on EquityOne Sketch Plan

Dear Chairman Casey Anderson,

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These are my initial comments only; I will have more comments as the process unfolds and our experts review the plan.

Regards,
Lynn Gallagher
5710 Gloster Rd
Bethesda, MD 20816

From: Jesse Travis <jessetravis@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 23, 2016 1:51 PM
To: planning@springfield20816.com
Subject: Equity One Sketch Plan

Dear Mr. Marcolin,

Now that Equity One has made their Sketch Plan public, I have the following concerns:

The Willett Branch is not indicated on the plan. The Sector Plan clearly states that the new Willett Branch Stream Valley Park is a core element of the Westbard Sector. Equity One must be required to address it in their design. To leave it out would compromise the whole project. Further, Equity One's commitment to excellent design should embrace the creek rather than turn its back on this unique feature of the Sector.

The Sketch Plan shows a new parking garage behind the Westwood Towers squarely in the 100 foot stream buffer. Any new structures in the buffer will seriously impair the stream and detract from the continuity of the new park. No waivers should be allowed for new buildings in the buffer.

The Sector Plan recommends that a cemetery delineation is done behind the Westwood Towers before any development is approved. As there is overwhelming evidence of an African American cemetery dating to the late 1800s, this should be done so that the new park can honor these early residents.

With the support of a strong sketch plan, the Willett Branch has the potential to be a show place for the County and a world class amenity to be enjoyed by everyone. Please support our community by requiring Equity One to create a sketch plan that embraces the new park and our local history.

Jesse Travis

5621 Namakagan Road, Bethesda, MD

MCP-Chair

From: Faye Fager <frfager@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 23, 2016 2:23 PM
To: planning@springfield20816.com
Subject: Equity One Sketch Plan

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Faye Fager
5705 Overlea Road
Bethesda, MD 20816

MCP-CTRACK

From: pkmackey <pkmackey@comcast.net>
Sent: Wednesday, August 24, 2016 9:34 AM
To: planning@springfield20816.com
Subject: Equity One Sketch Plan

Dear Mr. Marcolin,

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NAME, ADDRESS

Patti Mackey
4978 Sentinel Drive
Apt. 104
Bethesda, MD 20816
301-461-9786
240-743-4643

MCP-CTRACK

From: Patricia Mackey <pkmackey@comcast.net>
Sent: Wednesday, August 24, 2016 9:35 AM
To: MCP-Chair
Subject: Comments on EquityOne Sketch Plan

Dear Chairman Casey Anderson,

Even though the EquityOne Sketch Plan for the Westwood Shopping Center, and its surroundings, is now filed, please know that the people most affected by the project—the friends and neighbors who live in the area—do NOT support this massive re-development and urbanization project. We requested an updated shopping center, with a reasonable amount of new density (580 new units). We will continue to oppose this out-sized project as it is unreasonable for our suburban community.

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These are my initial comments only; I will have more comments as the process unfolds and our experts review the plan.

Regards,
Patricia Mackey
4978 Sentinel Dr, Apt 104
Bethesda, MD 20816

MCP-CTRACK

From: Erin Harcourt <erinharcourt@verizon.net>
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 8:08 PM
To: planning@springfield20816.com
Subject: Equity One Sketch Plan

Dear Mr. Marcolin,

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Erin Harcourt
4409 Chalfont Place
Bethesda, MD 20816

MCP-CTRACK

From: Tom Buzas <lorax1971@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 24, 2016 2:19 PM
To: planning@springfield20816.com
Subject: Equity One Sketch Plan

Dear Mr. Marcolin,

Now that Equity One has made their Sketch Plan public, I have the following concerns:

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Kind Regards,

Thomas Buzas
10122 Ashwood Dr
Kensington, MD 20895

Sent from my Apple Phone

MCP-CTRACK

From: MERTZMD@aol.com
Sent: Wednesday, August 24, 2016 10:56 PM
To: MCP-Chair; Marcolin, John
Subject: WILLETT BRANCH IN THE WESTBARD SECTOR

RECEIVED
AUG 25 2016

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Dear Planning Staff and Board:

Please support this promised watershed green space and possible park as we loose so much of our surrounding green areas to asphalt and concrete. Force Equity One to comply with the agreed upon concept of a Willet Branch green space and restore the creek and public park potential. Developers require supervision by the county entities and enforcement or they do not adhere to their commitments as frequently seen in the past in our country.

We and coming generations will all benefit. Thank you for your service.

Pamela Mertz
5100 Baltimore Ave
Bethesda MD 20186

MCP-CTRACK

From: Lynne Baum <lbaumvill@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 25, 2016 5:01 AM
To: planning@springfield20816.com
Subject: Equity One Sketch Plan

Dear Mr. Marcolin,

Now that Equity One has made their Sketch Plan public, I have the following concerns:

The Willett Branch is not indicated on the plan. The Sector Plan clearly states that the new Willett Branch Stream Valley Park is a core element of the Westbard Sector. Equity One must be required to address it in their design. Further, Equity One's commitment to excellent design should embrace the creek rather than turn its back on this unique feature of the Sector.

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Lynne M. Baum
5004 Fort Sumner Dr
Bethesda MD 20816

Sent from my iPhone

MCP-CTRACK

From: Lynne Baum <lbaumvill@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 25, 2016 5:08 AM
To: MCP-Chair; Marcolin, John
Subject: Equity One Sketch Plan

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I previously wrote to you indicating my concerns about the excessive density of the proposed sketch plan. While everyone supports a modest updating of the area, the residents of the surrounding neighborhoods, including my neighbors and me in Sumner, oppose the high number of new residential units. This will vastly change the character of our neighborhood. I have heard no adequate justification for this.

Sincere regards,

Lynne M. Baum, Esq.
5004 Fort Sumner Dr
Bethesda MD 20816

MCP-CTRACK

From: George Driesen <ravgershom@verizon.net>
Sent: Thursday, August 25, 2016 5:19 PM
To: planning@springfield20816.com
Subject: Equity One Sketch Plan

RECEIVED
AUG 26 2016

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

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NAME, ADDRESS

George Driesen 4982 sentinel dr Bethesda md

Sent from my iPhone

MCP-CTRACK

From: Jill Lucas <lucas.jill@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 25, 2016 5:48 PM
To: planning@springfield20816.com
Subject: Equity One Sketch Plan

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Jill and Bill Lucas

MCP-CTRACK

From: Brad Northrup <northrup.brad@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, August 26, 2016 2:34 PM
To: planning@springfield20816.com
Subject: Equity One Sketch Plan

Dear Mr. Marcolin,

Now that Equity One has made their Sketch Plan public, I have the following concerns:

The Willett Branch is not indicated on the plan. The Sector Plan clearly states that the new Willett Branch Stream Valley Park is a core element of the Westbard Sector. Equity One must be required to address it in their design. To leave it out would compromise the whole project. Further, Equity One's commitment to excellent design should embrace the creek rather than turn its back on this unique feature of the Sector.

The Sketch Plan shows a new parking garage behind the Westwood Towers squarely in the 100 foot stream buffer. Any new structures in the buffer will seriously impair the stream and detract from the continuity of the new park. No waivers should be allowed for new buildings in the buffer.

The Sector Plan recommends that a cemetery delineation is done behind the Westwood Towers before any development is approved. As there is overwhelming evidence of an African American cemetery dating to the late 1800s, this should be done so that the new park can honor these early residents.

With the support of a strong sketch plan, the Willett Branch has the potential to be a show place for the County and a world class amenity to be enjoyed by everyone. Please support our community by requiring Equity One to create a sketch plan that embraces the new park and our local history.

Brad Northrup
Vice President - Brookmont Civic League
4004 Maryland Avenue
Bethesda, MD 20816

From: Peggy Cloherty
To: planning@springfield20816.com
Subject: Equity One Sketch Plan
Date: Friday, August 26, 2016 6:54:22 PM

Dear Mr. Marcolin,

Willet Branch restoration is the sole attractive amenity promised to local residents who are affected by Equity One's development. I was disappointed that Equity One wrote me that Willett Branch is MoCo's responsibility and that explains its omission from its Sketch Plan. I am counting on you and your team to ensure that Willett Branch is restored to its natural beauty the and asset it should be for us and future generations.

Now that Equity One has made their Sketch Plan public, I have the following concerns:

The Willett Branch is not indicated on the plan. The Sector Plan clearly states that the new Willett Branch Stream Valley Park is a core element of the Westbard Sector. Equity One must be required to address it in their design. To leave it out would compromise the whole project. Further, Equity One's commitment to excellent design should embrace the creek rather than turn its back on this unique feature of the Sector.

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Margaret Cloherty
5005 Sangamore Road,
Bethesda, MD 20816

Sent from my iPad

From: Brad Northrup
To: planning@springfield20816.com
Subject: Equity One Sketch Plan
Date: Friday, August 26, 2016 2:34:17 PM

Dear Mr. Marcolin,

Now that Equity One has made their Sketch Plan public, I have the following concerns:

The Willett Branch is not indicated on the plan. The Sector Plan clearly states that the new Willett Branch Stream Valley Park is a core element of the Westbard Sector. Equity One must be required to address it in their design. To leave it out would compromise the whole project. Further, Equity One's commitment to excellent design should embrace the creek rather than turn its back on this unique feature of the Sector.

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Brad Northrup
Vice President - Brookmont Civic League
4004 Maryland Avenue
Bethesda, MD 20816

MCP-CTRACK

From: Price Roe <priceroe@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 31, 2016 12:52 AM
To: planning@springfield20816.com
Subject: Willet Branch / Equity One plan

RECEIVED
AUG 31 2016

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Dear Mr. Marcolin,

I am writing to urge you to require Equity One to create a sketch plan that supports the restoration of Willet Branch. The redevelopment of Westbard presents a once in a generation opportunity to promote greater green space for native habitat and resident recreation. After promising talk early on from Equity One about Willet Branch, I am greatly disappointed to see that the current plan does not support its restoration.

I am further alarmed that the new plan includes a parking garage behind Westwood Towers that sits directly in the stream buffer, which will have a negative environmental impact. Please do not grant a waiver of any kind for new buildings in the stream buffer.

The Sector Plan clearly states that the new Willett Branch Stream Valley Park is a core element of the Westbard Sector. There is broad community support for this position, including among those who have strong feelings against Equity One's redevelopment plan. Unlike those members of the community, whose point of view I understand but do not subscribe to, I support the broad strokes of Equity One's redevelopment plan with the notable exception of their lack of a Willet Branch sketch plan. Equity One must be required to address it in their design. To leave it out would compromise the whole project. Further, Equity One's commitment to design excellence should embrace the creek rather than exclude it.

With the support of a strong sketch plan, the Willett Branch has the potential to be a show place for the County and a world class amenity to be enjoyed by everyone.

Please support our community by requiring Equity One to create a sketch plan that embraces the new park and our local history.

Respectfully submitted,

Price Roe
5804 Cleves Ln
Bethesda, MD 20816

September 2016

MCP-CTRACK

From: Price Roe <priceroe@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, September 04, 2016 4:08 AM
To: Marcolin, John
Cc: MCP-Chair
Subject: Willett Branch improvements

RECEIVED
SEP 06 2016

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Dear Mr. Marcolin,

I am writing to urge you to require Equity One to create a sketch plan that supports the restoration of Willet Branch. The redevelopment of Westbard presents a once in a generation opportunity to promote greater green space for native habitat and resident recreation. After promising talk early on from Equity One about Willet Branch, I am greatly disappointed to see that the current plan does not support its restoration.

I am further alarmed that the new plan includes a parking garage behind Westwood Towers that sits directly in the stream buffer, which will have a negative environmental impact. Please do not grant a waiver of any kind for new buildings in the stream buffer.

The Sector Plan clearly states that the new Willett Branch Stream Valley Park is a core element of the Westbard Sector. There is broad community support for this position, including among those who have strong feelings against Equity One's redevelopment plan. Unlike those members of the community, whose point of view I understand but do not subscribe to, I support the broad strokes of Equity One's redevelopment plan with the notable exception of the absence of the Willet Branch restoration in the sketch plan. I believe strongly that Equity One should be required to address Willet Branch in their design. To leave it out would compromise the whole project. Further, Equity One's commitment to design excellence should embrace the creek rather than exclude it.

With the support of a strong sketch plan, the Willett Branch has the potential to be a show place for the County and a world class amenity to be enjoyed by everyone.

Please support our community by requiring Equity One to create a sketch plan that embraces the new park and our local history.

Respectfully submitted,

Price Roe
5804 Cleves Ln
Bethesda, MD 20816

MCP-CTRACK

From: Mina Vance <minajohn@verizon.net>
Sent: Monday, September 05, 2016 8:45 AM
To: MCP-Chair
Subject: Comments on EquityOne Sketch Plan

Dear Chairman Casey Anderson,

Even though the EquityOne Sketch Plan for the Westwood Shopping Center, and its surroundings, is now filed, please know that the people most affected by the project—the friends and neighbors who live in the area—do NOT support this massive re-development and urbanization project. We requested an updated shopping center, with a reasonable amount of new density (580 new units). We will continue to oppose this out-sized project as it is unreasonable for our suburban community.

In the meantime, here are my initial comments on the Sketch Plan application document:

-The EquityOne Massing Diagram is massive, blocky and unattractive. Even though the residents were told, repeatedly, by you, our MoCo government officials, that Sector Plans are never fully built-out ... that is exactly what is on-tap here.

-The Area Dedicated to Public Use is decreasing dramatically, according to the Sketch Plan's own data. According to page 3 of the Sketch Plan application, the public use area is decreasing from 3.05 acres to 1.69 acres, essentially halving the public use space, while, at the same time, pushing density ever skyward. Something is wrong with this picture. The proposed public use area is excruciatingly tiny and wholly inadequate for the density which is proposed.

Mr. Brown thinks the Sketch Plan will "greatly enhance the Westbard area of the County." We disagree. We did not ask that our suburban community be urbanized in favor of a New York developer.

These are my initial comments only; I will have more comments as the process unfolds and our experts review the plan.

Regards,
Mina Vance
6215 Garnett Dr
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

MCP-CTRACK

From: Elizabeth Bowser <smbtrade@aol.com>
Sent: Monday, September 05, 2016 6:47 AM
To: MCP-Chair
Subject: Comments on EquityOne Sketch Plan

RECEIVED
SEP 07 2016

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Dear Chairman Casey Anderson,

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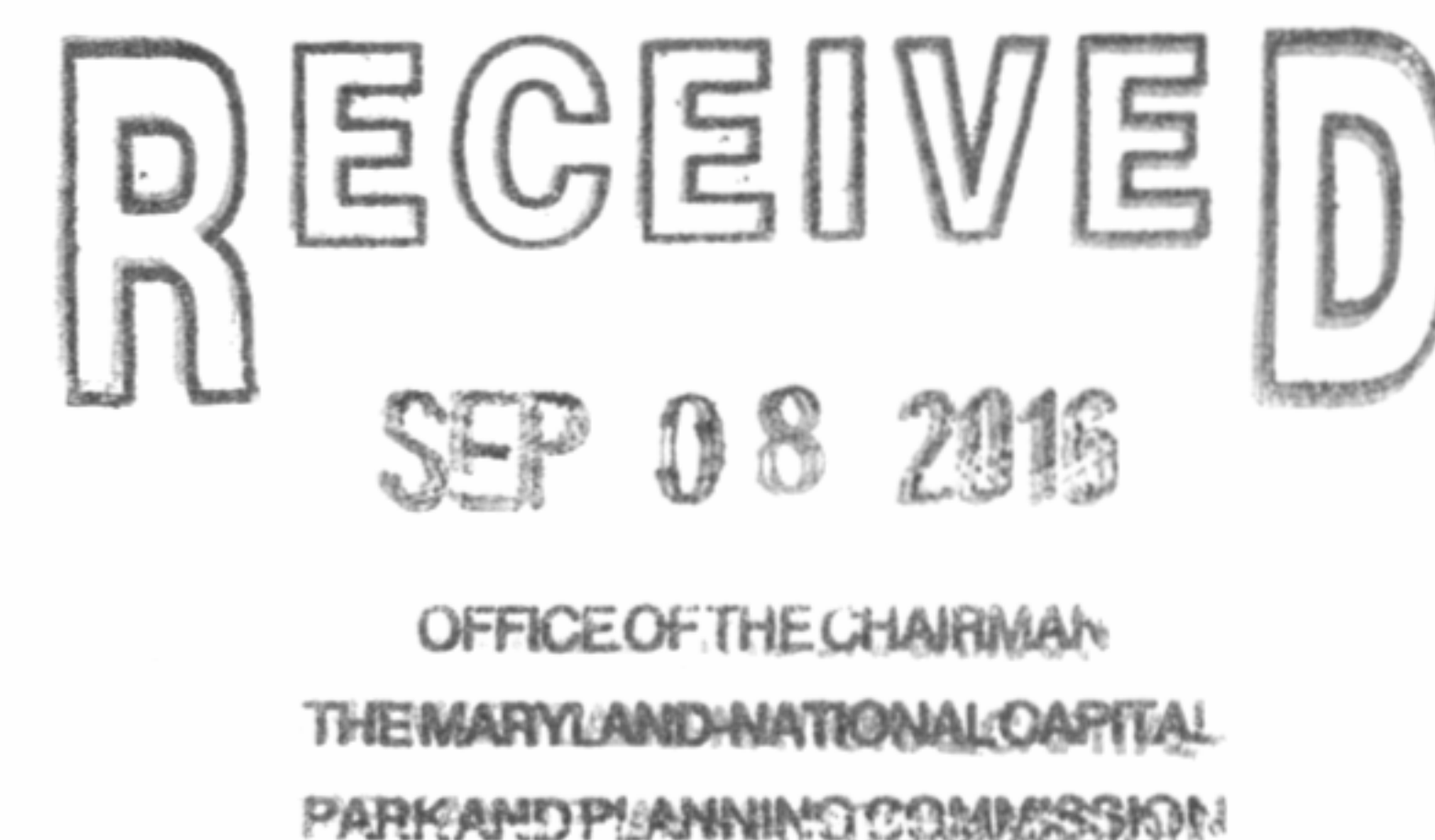
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These are my initial comments only; I will have more comments as the process unfolds and our experts review the plan.

Regards,
Elizabeth Bowser
5807 Devonshire Dr
Bethesda, MD 20816

MCP-CTRACK

From: Presley, Amy
Sent: Thursday, September 08, 2016 9:25 AM
To: MCP-Chair
Subject: FW: Comments on EquityOne Sketch Plan



From: Elizabeth Bowser
Sent: Monday, September 5, 2016 6:47:14 AM (UTC-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada)
To: Presley, Amy
Subject: Comments on EquityOne Sketch Plan

Dear Ms. Amy Presley ,

Even though the EquityOne Sketch Plan for the Westwood Shopping Center, and its surroundings, is now filed, please know that the people most affected by the project—the friends and neighbors who live in the area—do NOT support this massive re-development and urbanization project. We requested an updated shopping center, with a reasonable amount of new density (580 new units). We will continue to oppose this out-sized project as it is unreasonable for our suburban community.

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These are my initial comments only; I will have more comments as the process unfolds and our experts review the plan.

Regards,
Elizabeth Bowser
5807 Devonshire Dr
Bethesda, MD 20816

MCP-CTRACK

From: terryma@verizon.net
Sent: Thursday, September 08, 2016 3:09 PM
To: planning@springfield20816.com
Subject: Equity One Sketch Plan

Dear Mr. Marcolin,

Now that Equity One has made their Sketch Plan public, I have the following concerns:

The Willett Branch is not indicated on the plan. The Sector Plan clearly states that the new Willett Branch Stream Valley Park is a core element of the Westbard Sector. Equity One must be required to address it in their design. To leave it out would compromise the whole project. Further, Equity One's commitment to excellent design should embrace the creek rather than turn its back on this unique feature of the Sector.

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Margaret Terry. Allandale Rd

Sent from my iPhone

MCP-CTRACK**RECEIVED**

SEP 09 2016

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

From: Sarah Morse <morsekathan@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, September 09, 2016 1:03 PM
To: Marcolin, John; Paul, Susanne
Cc: Roger Berliner; Wright, Gwen; MCP-Chair;
councilmember.Riemer@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.Leventhal@montgomerycountymd.gov; Nancy Floreen; Jenny Sue Dunner; Lloyd Guerici; bbrown@Equityone.com
Subject: Objection to the Proposed Parking Structure in the Willett Branch Buffer
Attachments: LFWA Sector Plan Text Analysis on Garage behind HOC 9-9-16.pdf

Hi John and Susanne,

As you know, Little Falls Watershed Alliance strongly opposed the construction of a parking garage in the Willett Branch buffer behind the Westwood Towers (HOC building). The area behind the HOC building is the heart of the plan for a new park - it is the widest part and the place where people can enter and exit the greenway. It is an area where early African American residents were buried and is full of history. To succeed as a world class park, it should be inviting and welcome people to come, go and stay a little. To put a parking garage there is to derail the entire idea.

We have finally gotten a copy of the final Sector Plan and feel that it supports our position. Below and attached is a text analysis from the sector plan.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. We are so pleased to be working on the project and excited to see it to completion.

Best,

Sarah

Sarah Morse
Executive Director
Little Falls Watershed Alliance

Date: September 9, 2016

To: John Marcolin, Montgomery Park and Planning
Susanne Paul, Montgomery Parks

From: Sarah Morse, Executive Director, Little Falls Watershed Alliance
Re: Text Analysis of Westbard Sector Plan Relevant to the Garage behind the HOC Building

In its Sketch Plan, Equity One proposes a garage behind the HOC building—two stories for 125 cars with a pool on top, to be built on an existing parking lot in the Willett Branch stream buffer. LFWA opposes this structure because of its presence in the buffer and the fact that it will not allow the building to embrace the stream. Below we detail points in the Westbard Sector Plan that support our position:

1. Sector Plan calls for surface lots to turn green.

In a letter from HOC on February 11, 2016 to the Council, HOC requested that the Plan's language allow for development within the buffer on existing impervious surfaces, specifically referring to a request for a garage in the buffer. Instead of adopting this language, the Council included language that would encourage impervious parking lots to be changed to green space:

- On p. 57, the Sector Plan states that with redevelopment, "surface areas for roads and parking should be reduced and replaced with a shaded, more inviting and healthier landscape."
- In a discussion of the Willett Branch in District 1 (which includes the HOC building), the Sector Plan calls for reducing "impervious surface parking areas." The HOC parking lot is one of the only impervious parking areas in the buffer in that District, and the Sector Plan makes no exception for it.

2. Sector Plan specifically recognizes the buffer on HOC site as a restricted area.

The County Council added language to the Planning Board's draft of the Sector Plan that restricts development on the HOC site. Rather than allowing a parking structure there, the language contemplates the property as part of a critically important section of the stream valley park.

- The site is divided into parcels 4a (the existing HOC building) and 4b (the areas where the new buildings would be built). The Sector Plan contemplates new development only on parcel 4b.
- On p. 72, the Sector Plan confirms the zoning for the existing HOC building. It also states that "[a] significant portion of the site is restricted by environmental constraints such as a stream buffer and flood plain." This language implies that further construction on the site would not be appropriate.
- On p. 76, in discussing the Willett Branch on the HOC site 4a parcels [238, 240, and 175], the Sector Plan recommends that parts of those parcels be designated "as a floodplain area and as a stream naturalization/amenity area for development within Westbard," that there be "a landscape setting in this location that is respectful of site history," and that "the pedestrian crossing near the floodplain area [be rebuilt] as a connection from the Capital Crescent Trail to the new commercial center."

3. Sector Plan requires attractive pedestrian walks.

The Sector Plan focuses on the importance of connectivity for pedestrians, including the bridge behind the HOC building. It also stresses that these paths must be attractive—meaning pedestrians should not see a parking structure from the stream valley. The paths must also be connected to buildings more directly:

- Page 33 states that "the quality of the pedestrian network is an important issue."
- Page 49 calls for "safe and attractive pedestrian facilities" with "improved connections to natural areas."
- Page 51 recommends "safe and inviting pedestrian routes across the Willett Branch for people who want to walk from Westbard Avenue to River Road," and that there be "an interconnected system of safe, convenient and attractive routes between parks, civic spaces, plazas, residential communities and commercial buildings."

4. Sector Plan parking guidance would prohibit the HOC garage structure.

The Sector Plan has two types of guidance on parking, neither of which would permit structured parking behind the HOC building:

- In design principles for District 1 (which includes the HOC building), on p. 74 the Plan recommends "[s]ituating most of the parking underground with some on-street and surface parking to accommodate shoppers making

stop-and-go trips to service retail establishments.” While this recommendation is for the Giant site, it is the only parking recommended for all of District 1 and the principles seemingly apply to the entire district – in fact, that is the approach Equity One is using in all of the other buildings it plans to construct in the area.

- With respect to redevelopment of American Plant Food and adjacent properties, the Sector Plan states that parking should be “in underground structures or above-ground structured parking fully screened by residential units and retail.” This clause clearly shows the Plan’s interest in connecting residences directly to the stream, and maintaining an attractive front for pedestrians in the greenway. Structured parking at the HOC building could not be screened in the same way.

5. Sector Plan maps contemplate no parking garage behind HOC.

Every single map or schematic plan of the Sector shows the HOC building with a green Willett Branch behind it and no parking structure. The County Council could have changed these images, but did not. See for example maps on pages 12, 13, 50, 52, 54, 68, and 74. Furthermore, the massing diagram that Equity One presented to the community in its public Sketch Plan meeting also failed to include the parking structure.

6. Sector Plan balancing language does not apply to HOC site.

The balancing language in the Sector Plan on p. 57, 75, and 101 is meant to allow “recommended redevelopment” to proceed in the buffer where necessary. The Council discussion of this language included difficult sites like Manor Care and Westbard II. It did not approve a parking garage behind the HOC building. Parking for the new HOC structures on site 4b could and should be underground, and structured parking is not “necessary.” Furthermore, the garage would seriously harm the other goals in the balancing test: “to create attractive and accessible green spaces that provide interconnectivity with urban green infrastructure and that improve stream ecology.”

The Westbard Sector Plan repeatedly focuses on the critical importance of the Willett Branch naturalization and greenway project to the goals of the plan. The Willett Branch project is mentioned on pages too numerous to relate. On p. 19, it is recognized as “the primary community asset,” and the dedication of land and naturalization of the stream are noted as “critical” public benefits on p. 98-99. There is no need for a parking garage to intrude on the vision of the greenway that so permeates the Plan.

The area behind the HOC building is the heart of the plan for a new park – it is the widest part and the place where people can enter and exit the greenway. It is an area where early African American residents were buried and is full of history. To succeed as a world class park, this spot should be inviting and welcome people to come, go and stay a little. We believe that to put a parking garage there is to derail the entire idea.

Thank you for your work on this project,

Sarah Morse
301-907-3298
Little Falls Watershed Alliance

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*Support your local watershed group. Visit Little Falls Watershed Alliance online at www.LFWA.org
Find us on [Facebook!](#)*



LITTLE FALLS WATERSHED ALLIANCE

EDUCATION - ACTION - STEWARDSHIP

Date: September 9, 2016

To: John Marcolin, Montgomery Park and Planning
Susanne Paul, Montgomery Parks

From: Sarah Morse, Executive Director, Little Falls Watershed Alliance

Re: Text Analysis of Westbard Sector Plan Relevant to the Garage behind the HOC Building

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Thank you for your work on this project,

Sarah Morse
301-907-3298
Little Falls Watershed Alliance

SEP 12 2016

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

From: Sarah Morse <morsekathan@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, September 11, 2016 9:18 PM
To: Marcolin, John; Paul, Susanne
Cc: Roger Berliner; Wright, Gwen; MCP-Chair;
councilmember.Riemer@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.Leventhal@montgomerycountymd.gov; Nancy Floreen; Jenny Sue
Dunner; Nelson, Katherine; bbrown@Equityone.com
Subject: LFWA response to Equity One Revised Sketch Plan of Sept 2, 2016
Attachments: LFWA Response to Equity One Revised Sketch Plan of Sept 2, 2016 – Changes and Refusals to Change.pdf

Hi John and Susanne,

Members of the Little Falls Watershed Alliance have reviewed the revised Sketch Plan from Equity One. We just got it yesterday, so we probably missed things, but we wanted to share with you some points we are concerned about. We are grateful for the stakeholders meetings and hopeful that they will produce a park that the entire County can be proud of. However, based on Equity One's response to the extensive DRC comments, we do not believe that they share the same vision for the Sector. Below are just some of their responses that lead us to this conclusion.

1. **Willett Branch**

- Equity One adds Willett Branch to the Sketch Plan justification document in more places, but not all – not in the objectives of the Sector Plan.
- Did not add WB to any maps except a slight reference in the massing diagrams and the pedestrian link at American Plant in the ped/bike diagram. Added a new diagram showing WB and the proposed “buffer” it wants to recognize – see p. 123
- Makes it clear in comments that it will dedicate land up to its buffer line only.
- Only agreed to a “potential” provision of funds for the project. In the comments: “Further monetary contribution will need to be examined by Applicant in the context of other provided public benefits [i.e. the street realignment?] and imposed constraints [i.e. the garage?].”
- Is not counting dedication or funds as a public benefit. It therefore does not count the land as public space, and continues to count private land as public space in its 10% calculation. It also points out that it doesn't need to include the WB in public benefits because it has already exceeded the number of required public benefit points – now 106 (see #4 below) instead of the required 50 for any project over 10,000 SF.
- Continues to hide behind the fact that this is a Parks project to avoid adding anything about naturalization, trails, bike paths, etc.
- The footprint of Bowlmor has been pulled back some from the stream, as was shown in the cross-sections we saw at the Planning Dept. (so it is not so much on the steep slope)
- Still includes the parking garage. Added it to the first (but not second) massing diagram, and said it is expected to be 50 feet high.

2. **Manor Care site.** Planners challenged the Manor Care site proposal as causing encroachment of a forested steep slope and too close to the stream. Equity One responded that this is acceptable, given the Sector Plan's balancing language and did not change the siting of those properties.

3. **Street realignment.** The planners requested that the Westbard road realignment be the only option in the Sketch Plan and asked Equity One to remove the alternate option (in which Westbard Ave remains in its current location). Equity One refused to remove the alternative, stating that it would accept street alignment at time of preliminary plan IF it can keep the utilities where they are (as in above ground), they get the needed approvals from government agencies, and “the alternative (existing) alignment is not removed from the plans until Willett Branch and Kenwood Tributary stream valley buffers are established and permit development acceptable to Applicant.”

LFWA: *Appears they are pitting the stream against the street.*

4. **No longer claims exceptional design as a public benefit**

- Leaves out “exceptional design” from the list of public benefits. In the comments, Equity One stated that this is because planners want to put utilities underground Westbard Avenue. Also refuses to put the utilities underground with its road realignment in response to a comment from MCDOT – if forced, it would refuse to realign the road at all.
- Another reason may have been to avoid having buildings along the stream embrace the WB.
- Perkins Eastman, the architect in the original Sketch Plan is no longer listed.

LFWA: *Will the buildings still be planned with good design?*

- Its refusal to include exceptional design as an amenity means that it also refuses to comply with transit requests to provide a lot of indoor and outdoor transit information displays, public pavilions for outreach events, and a place to get transit info and buy passes.

5. **Will not discuss buildings embracing stream.** In response to comments that the buildings along the WB should face the stream, Equity One states that those buildings needs to face the street with retail entrances and cannot have the back of the building along the road. [This makes sense, but buildings can have two fronts.] It goes on to state that “As the improvements to the stream are further defined, the Applicant will evaluate activating the residential space facing onto the stream,” and later says it will address building architecture near the stream at the time of Site Plan. It will not commit to anything now.

6. **Cemetery.** Despite a request from planners that a reference to a cemetery be included, Equity One refused, saying it wasn’t needed in its statement of justification of the plan and said “there is no conclusive evidence to suggest any graves currently exist on the property.”

LFWA: *We have been looking into this and can find no evidence that the graves were moved. We have contacted all the cemeteries that are rumored to have received the graves as well as the funeral home that was rumored to have done the work. None have any records of receiving moved remains from this area. Oral history suggests that the graves were not moved or at the very least, only some of them were moved.*

7. **Phasing changes.** Changed the phasing to include the Giant and the two parks and Manor Care in the phase 1, Westwood II in phase 1 or 2, and the THs by the Giant and the HOC first building and garage in phase 2. The second HOC building in front of American Plant would be phase 3 and Bowlmor phase 4.

8. **WSSC.** Equity One plans to address all WSSC issues in the preliminary plan and site plan. Even refuses to show water and sewer connections, which WSSC called “critical” for it to be able to comment.

LFWA: *Will these be in the buffer? Will that be a problem for the creek restoration?*

Equity One (probably unintentionally) left out #51 in response to Amy Quant comments – that existing water mains and pipe sizes, material, etc. should be shown on the plan. (They responded to a similar comment on sewers).

9. **SWM.** Removed a sentence on supplementing SWM with structural facilities such as underground vaults or a fee in lieu thereof – due to a comment challenging the fee portion, and said that it will address SWM at preliminary plan.

10. **Affordable housing.** In the comments regarding 15% affordable housing throughout the project, Equity One’s response was vague. It’s not clear where it will put all that housing, and may avoid putting much in the townhouses. Its comments suggest it will rely on HOC agreements that satisfy the requirement by putting this housing on other sites in the Sector Plan.

11. **Central green lawn.** Refused to commit to a central lawn and replied to Parks that everything shown is illustrative [all concrete mainly] and will deal with this issue at Site Plan.

LFWA: *This makes the need for the greenway even more important.*

12. **Miscellaneous.**

- The county has a new fee structure that may help developers as part of a revised Subdivision Staging Policy. Equity One is not agreeing to some fee payments in advance if it can get the better deal – it is determining whether the new or old rules apply.

- Won't agree to more than 2 bikeshare stations, as opposed to the requested 4.
- Has not agreed to do one preliminary plan for the whole project, as requested. It appears to hinge on whether the Sketch Plan is approved to its satisfaction.

Thank you for your work on this project,

Sarah Morse
Executive Director
Little Falls Watershed Alliance

*Support your local watershed group. Visit Little Falls Watershed Alliance online at www.LFWA.org
Find us on Facebook!*



LITTLE FALLS WATERSHED ALLIANCE

EDUCATION - ACTION - STEWARDSHIP

Date: September 11, 2016

To: John Marcolin, Montgomery Park and Planning
Susanne Paul, Montgomery Parks

From: Sarah Morse, Executive Director, Little Falls Watershed Alliance

Re: Little Falls Watershed Alliance Response to Equity One Revised Sketch Plan of Sept 2, 2016

Hi John and Susanne,

Members of the Little Falls Watershed Alliance have reviewed the revised Sketch Plan from Equity One. We just got it yesterday, so we probably missed things, but we wanted to share with you some points we are concerned about. We are grateful for the stakeholders meetings and hopeful that they will produce a park that the entire County can be proud of, however based on Equity One's response to the extensive DRC comments, we do not believe that they share the same vision for the Sector. Below are just some of their responses (changes and refusal to make changes) that lead us to this conclusion.

1. Willett Branch

- Equity One adds Willett Branch to the Sketch Plan justification document in more places, but not all – not in the objectives of the Sector Plan.
- Did not add WB to any maps except a slight reference in the massing diagrams and the pedestrian link at American Plant in the ped/bike diagram. Added a new diagram showing WB and the proposed “buffer” it wants to recognize – see p. 123
- Makes it clear in comments that it will dedicate land up to its buffer line only.
- Only agreed to a “potential” provision of funds for the project. In the comments: “Further monetary contribution will need to be examined by Applicant in the context of other provided public benefits [i.e. the street realignment?] and imposed constraints [i.e. the garage?].”
- Is not counting dedication or funds as a public benefit. It therefore does not count the land as public space, and continues to count private land as public space in its 10% calculation. It also points out that it doesn't need to include the WB in public benefits because it has already exceeded the number of required public benefit points – now 106 (see #4 below) instead of the required 50 for any project over 10,000 SF.
- Continues to hide behind the fact that this is a Parks project to avoid adding anything about naturalization, trails, bike paths, etc.
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- Still includes the parking garage. Added it to the first (but not second) massing diagram, and said it is expected to be 50 feet high.

2. **Manor Care site.** Planners challenged the Manor Care site proposal as causing encroachment of a forested steep slope and too close to the stream. Equity One responded that this is acceptable, given the Sector Plan's balancing language and did not change the siting of those properties.

4920 Dorset Avenue, Chevy Chase, MD 20815 • www.LFWA.org

Little Falls Watershed Alliance is a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization. All donations are tax deductible.

3. **Street realignment.** The planners requested that the Westbard road realignment be the only option in the Sketch Plan and asked Equity One to remove the alternate option (in which Westbard Ave remains in its current location). Equity One refused to remove the alternative, stating that it would accept street alignment at time of preliminary plan IF it can keep the utilities where they are (as in above ground), they get the needed approvals from government agencies, and "the alternative (existing) alignment is not removed from the plans until Willett Branch and Kenwood Tributary stream valley buffers are established and permit development acceptable to Applicant."

LFWA: Appears they are pitting the stream against the street.

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LFWA: Will the buildings still be planned with good design?

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LFWA: We have been looking into this and can find no evidence that the graves were moved. We have contacted all the cemeteries that are rumored to have received the graves as well as the funeral home that was rumored to have done the work. None have any records of receiving moved remains from this area. Oral history suggests that the graves were not moved or at the very least, only some of them were moved.

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- Won't agree to more than 2 bikeshare stations, as opposed to the requested 4.
- Has not agreed to do one preliminary plan for the whole project, as requested. It appears to hinge on whether the Sketch Plan is approved to its satisfaction.

Thank you for your work on this project,

Sarah Morse
301-907-3298
Little Falls Watershed Alliance

MCP-CTRACK

From: mapplebaum@hotmail.com
Sent: Wednesday, September 14, 2016 10:22 PM
To: MCP-Chair
Subject: Comments on EquityOne Sketch Plan

RECEIVED
SEP 15 2016

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Dear Chairman Casey Anderson,

Even though the EquityOne Sketch Plan for the Westwood Shopping Center, and its surroundings, is now filed, please know that the people most affected by the project—the friends and neighbors who live in the area—do NOT support this massive re-development and urbanization project. We requested an updated shopping center, with a reasonable amount of new density (580 new units). We will continue to oppose this out-sized project as it is unreasonable for our suburban community.

In the meantime, here are my initial comments on the Sketch Plan application document:

-The EquityOne Massing Diagram is massive, blocky and unattractive. Even though the residents were told, repeatedly, by you, our MoCo government officials, that Sector Plans are never fully built-out ... that is exactly what is on-tap here.

-The Area Dedicated to Public Use is decreasing dramatically, according to the Sketch Plan's own data. According to page 3 of the Sketch Plan application, the public use area is decreasing from 3.05 acres to 1.69 acres, essentially halving the public use space, while, at the same time, pushing density ever skyward. Something is wrong with this picture. The proposed public use area is excruciatingly tiny and wholly inadequate for the density which is proposed.

Mr. Brown thinks the Sketch Plan will "greatly enhance the Westbard area of the County." We disagree. We did not ask that our suburban community be urbanized in favor of a New York developer.

These are my initial comments only; I will have more comments as the process unfolds and our experts review the plan.

Regards,

5613 Bradley Blvd
Bethesda, MD 20814

MCP-CTRACK

RECEIVED

From: Jill Lucas <lucas.jill@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, September 19, 2016 7:38 AM
To: planning@springfield20816.com
Subject: Equity One Sketch Plan

SEP 19 2016
OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Dear Mr. Marcolin,

Now that Equity One has made their Sketch Plan public, I have the following concerns:

The Willett Branch is not indicated on the plan. The Sector Plan clearly states that the new Willett Branch Stream Valley Park is a core element of the Westbard Sector. Equity One must be required to address it in their design. To leave it out would compromise the whole project. Further, Equity One's commitment to excellent design should embrace the creek rather than turn its back on this unique feature of the Sector.

The Sketch Plan shows a new parking garage behind the Westwood Towers squarely in the 100 foot stream buffer. Any new structures in the buffer will seriously impair the stream and detract from the continuity of the new park. No waivers should be allowed for new buildings in the buffer.

The Sector Plan recommends that a cemetery delineation is done behind the Westwood Towers before any development is approved. As there is overwhelming evidence of an African American cemetery dating to the late 1800s, this should be done so that the new park can honor these early residents.

With the support of a strong sketch plan, the Willett Branch has the potential to be a show place for the County and a world class amenity to be enjoyed by everyone. Please support our community by requiring Equity One to create a sketch plan that embraces the new park and our local history.

Jill Lucas
5315 Albemarle Street
Bethesda, MD 20816

From: Kaki Power <kakipower617@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 20, 2016 2:23 PM
To: planning@springfield20816.com
Subject: Equity One Sketch Plan

RECEIVED
SEP 21 2016

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Dear Mr. Marcolin,

Now that Equity One has made their Sketch Plan public, I have the following concerns:

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Kaki Power
5316 Cardinal Court
Bethesda MD 20816

From: Sharron Cochran <scochran301@mac.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 20, 2016 4:00 PM
To: planning@springfield20816.com
Subject: Equity One Sketch Plan

Dear Mr. Marcolin,

Now that Equity One has made their Sketch Plan public, I have the following concerns:

The Willett Branch is not indicated on the plan. The Sector Plan clearly states that the new Willett Branch Stream Valley Park is a core element of the Westbard Sector. Equity One must be required to address it in their design. To leave it out would compromise the whole project. Further, Equity One's commitment to excellent design should embrace the creek rather than turn its back on this unique feature of the Sector.

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With the support of a strong sketch plan, the Willett Branch has the potential to be a show place for the County and a world class amenity to be enjoyed by everyone. **Please** support our community by requiring Equity One to create a sketch plan that embraces the new park and our local history.

Sharron Cochran
5223 Elliott Rd, Bethesda, MD 20816

MCP-CTRACK

From: Anne Brooks Rudzki <abrudzki@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 21, 2016 10:17 AM
To: planning@springfield20816.com
Subject: Equity One Sketch Plan

Dear Mr. Marcolin,

Now that Equity One has made their Sketch Plan public, I have the following concerns:

The Willett Branch is not indicated on the plan. The Sector Plan clearly states that the new Willett Branch Stream Valley Park is a core element of the Westbard Sector. Equity One must be required to address it in their design. To leave it out would compromise the whole project. Further, Equity One's commitment to excellent design should embrace the creek rather than turn its back on this unique feature of the Sector.

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With the support of a strong sketch plan, the Willett Branch has the potential to be a show place for the County and a world class amenity to be enjoyed by everyone. Please support our community by requiring Equity One to create a sketch plan that embraces the new park and our local history.

Anne Brooks Rudzki
5306 Elliott Road
Bethesda, MD 20816

MCP-CTRACK

From: Lauren and David Edelstein <Lauren.m.edelstein@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, September 26, 2016 1:39 PM
To: councilmember.berliner@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.elrich@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.hucker@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.floreen@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.leventhal@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.navarro@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.riemer@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.katz@montgomerycountymd.gov;
county.council@montgomerycountymd.gov; MCP-Chair
Subject: In support of the Westbard sectional map amendment

Sent from: Lauren.m.edelstein@gmail.com
Date: 09-26-2016

To: Montgomery County Council President Floreen And the Members of the Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850

RE: Westbard Sectional Map Amendment (H-116)

Dear Councilmembers,

I am writing in support of the Sectional Map Amendment (SMA) that reflects the Council-approved Westbard Sector Plan.

The approved sector plan reflects measured and thoughtful considerations that balance a range of needs in the Westbard community, including Equity One's proposal for redeveloping Westwood Shopping Center and surrounding properties into a vibrant mixed-use community hub that will bring important community benefits. These include a variety of new parks and open spaces, environmental improvements, new affordable housing and better street and pedestrian/cyclist connections.

The SMA should be adopted without delay to allow the process for the improvements and new investment Westbard needs to move forward.

We support the Equity One redevelopment. Please vote in support of it.

Name: Lauren and David Edelstein
Address: 7622 Winterberry Place
City: Bethesda
Zip: 20817

MCP-CTRACK

From: Heather Loren <Hloren08@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, September 26, 2016 1:43 PM
To: councilmember.berliner@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.elrich@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.hucker@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.floreen@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.leventhal@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.navarro@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.riemer@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.katz@montgomerycountymd.gov;
county.council@montgomerycountymd.gov; MCP-Chair
Subject: In support of the Westbard sectional map amendment

Sent from: Hloren08@gmail.com
Date: 09-26-2016

To: Montgomery County Council President Floreen And the Members of the Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850

RE: Westbard Sectional Map Amendment (H-116)

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The SMA should be adopted without delay to allow the process for the improvements and new investment Westbard needs to move forward.

I am in support of the development of the Westbard neighborhood.

Name: Heather Loren
Address: 5325 westbard ave #1021
City: bethesda
Zip: 20816

MCP-CTRACK

From: Timothy Monahan <timmonahan14@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, September 26, 2016 2:00 PM
To: councilmember.berliner@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.elrich@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.hucker@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.floreen@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.leventhal@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.navarro@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.riemer@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.katz@montgomerycountymd.gov;
county.council@montgomerycountymd.gov; MCP-Chair
Subject: In support of the Westbard sectional map amendment

Sent from: timmonahan14@gmail.com
Date: 09-26-2016

To: Montgomery County Council President Floreen And the Members of the Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850

RE: Westbard Sectional Map Amendment (H-116)

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The SMA should be adopted without delay to allow the process for the improvements and new investment Westbard needs to move forward.

Most importantly, the SMA is a continuation of the process that began with the Westbard Sector Plan approval. Opposition to the Sector Plan was vocal, and the Council thoughtfully considered those views and decided to move forward. Those opponents will no doubt continue efforts at this stage to stop the badly need redevelopment process. I hope the Council both listens to and considers those concerns, while also keeping them in context. I urge you to approve the SMA and move forward with this project. Thank you.

Name: Timothy Monahan
Address: 5440 Jordan Road
City: Bethesda
Zip: 20816

MCP-CTRACK

From: Candace Otto <CandaceOttoCMT@msn.com>
Sent: Monday, September 26, 2016 2:19 PM
To: councilmember.berliner@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.elrich@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.hucker@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.floreen@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.leventhal@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.navarro@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.riemer@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.katz@montgomerycountymd.gov;
county.council@montgomerycountymd.gov; MCP-Chair
Subject: In support of the Westbard sectional map amendment

Sent from: CandaceOttoCMT@msn.com
Date: 09-26-2016

To: Montgomery County Council President Floreen And the Members of the Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850

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The SMA should be adopted without delay to allow the process for the improvements and new investment Westbard needs to move forward.

Name: Candace Otto
Address: 5301 Westbard Circle, No. 225
City: Bethesda
Zip: 20816

MCP-CTRACK

From: Joe Coleman <coleman.joe.m@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, September 26, 2016 2:39 PM
To: councilmember.berliner@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.elrich@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.hucker@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.floreen@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.leventhal@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.navarro@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.riemer@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.katz@montgomerycountymd.gov;
county.council@montgomerycountymd.gov; MCP-Chair
Subject: In support of the Westbard sectional map amendment

Sent from: coleman.joe.m@gmail.com
Date: 09-26-2016

To: Montgomery County Council President Floreen And the Members of the Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850

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The SMA should be adopted without delay to allow the process for the improvements and new investment Westbard needs to move forward.

It's time to start this project. Small matters can be resolved later. Don't allow a minority of nay sayers hold up the forward movement of this inevitable project.

Name: Joe Coleman
Address: 5700 Marengo Rd
City: Bethesda
Zip: 20816

MCP-CTRACK

From: George Wisecarver <Jodge22@hotmail.com>
Sent: Monday, September 26, 2016 2:48 PM
To: councilmember.berliner@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.elrich@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.hucker@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.floreen@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.leventhal@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.navarro@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.riemer@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.katz@montgomerycountymd.gov;
county.council@montgomerycountymd.gov; MCP-Chair
Subject: In support of the Westbard sectional map amendment

Sent from: Jodge22@hotmail.com
Date: 09-26-2016

To: Montgomery County Council President Floreen And the Members of the Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850

RE: Westbard Sectional Map Amendment (H-116)

Dear Councilmembers,

I am writing in support of the Sectional Map Amendment (SMA) that reflects the Council-approved Westbard Sector Plan.

The approved sector plan reflects measured and thoughtful considerations that balance a range of needs in the Westbard community, including Equity One's proposal for redeveloping Westwood Shopping Center and surrounding properties into a vibrant mixed-use community hub that will bring important community benefits. These include a variety of new parks and open spaces, environmental improvements, new affordable housing and better street and pedestrian/cyclist connections.

The SMA should be adopted without delay to allow the process for the improvements and new investment Westbard needs to move forward.

I'm a supporter of this project as it will modernize a well located amenity base for future generations. I live in the Sumner neighborhood and have young children; the retail options for the surrounding neighborhoods are limited; we don't want to drive to downtown Bethesda; we want to walk or ride bikes to a new and improved Westbard.

Name: George Wisecarver
Address: 5116 Westpath Way
City: Bethesda
Zip: 20816

MCP-CTrack

From: Demaree Larry <larry@demareeassociates.com>
Sent: Monday, September 26, 2016 3:48 PM
To: councilmember.berliner@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.elrich@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.hucker@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.floreen@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.leventhal@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.navarro@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.riemer@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.katz@montgomerycountymd.gov;
county.council@montgomerycountymd.gov; MCP-Chair
Subject: In support of the Westbard sectional map amendment

Sent from: larry@demareeassociates.com
Date: 09-26-2016

To: Montgomery County Council President Floreen And the Members of the Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850

RE: Westbard Sectional Map Amendment (H-116)

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The SMA should be adopted without delay to allow the process for the improvements and new investment Westbard needs to move forward.

Please support the redevelopment of Westbard

Name: Demaree Larry
Address: 6623 Radnor Rd
City: Bethesda
Zip: 20817

MCP-CTRACK

From: Mark Leas <mark.leas@verizon.net>
Sent: Monday, September 26, 2016 4:01 PM
To: councilmember.berliner@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.elrich@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.hucker@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.floreen@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.leventhal@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.navarro@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.riemer@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.katz@montgomerycountymd.gov;
county.council@montgomerycountymd.gov; MCP-Chair
Subject: In support of the Westbard sectional map amendment

Sent from: mark.leas@verizon.net
Date: 09-26-2016

To: Montgomery County Council President Floreen And the Members of the Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850

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The SMA should be adopted without delay to allow the process for the improvements and new investment Westbard needs to move forward.

We who live in the Westbard area deserve to enjoy the convenience of a modern retail center like those currently found up county and in the Fairfax areas. My family currently drives to Fairfax or Clarksville to shop where there are stores, restaurants and up to date facilities that a mixed use retail/residential/office facility provides. The very vocal minority needs to move out of the way, because they will love it once the changes are made!

Name: Mark Leas
Address: 6215 Dahlonga Road
City: Bethesda
Zip: 20186

From: Ann Swett <annswett1@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 28, 2016 6:09 PM
To: planning@springfield20816.com
Subject: Equity One Sketch Plan

RECEIVED
SEP 29 2016

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Dear Mr. Marcolin,

Now that Equity One has made their Sketch Plan public, I have the following concerns:

The Willett Branch is not indicated on the plan. The Sector Plan clearly states that the new Willett Branch Stream Valley Park is a core element of the Westbard Sector. Equity One must be required to address it in their design. To leave it out would compromise the whole project. Further, Equity One's commitment to excellent design should embrace the creek rather than turn its back on this unique feature of the Sector.

The Sketch Plan shows a new parking garage behind the Westwood Towers squarely in the 100 foot stream buffer. Any new structures in the buffer will seriously impair the stream and detract from the continuity of the new park. No waivers should be allowed for new buildings in the buffer.

The Sector Plan recommends that a cemetery delineation is done behind the Westwood Towers before any development is approved. As there is overwhelming evidence of an African American cemetery dating to the late 1800s, this should be done so that the new park can honor these early residents.

With the support of a strong sketch plan, the Willett Branch has the potential to be a show place for the County and a world class amenity to be enjoyed by everyone. Please support our community by requiring Equity One to create a sketch plan that embraces the new park and our local history.

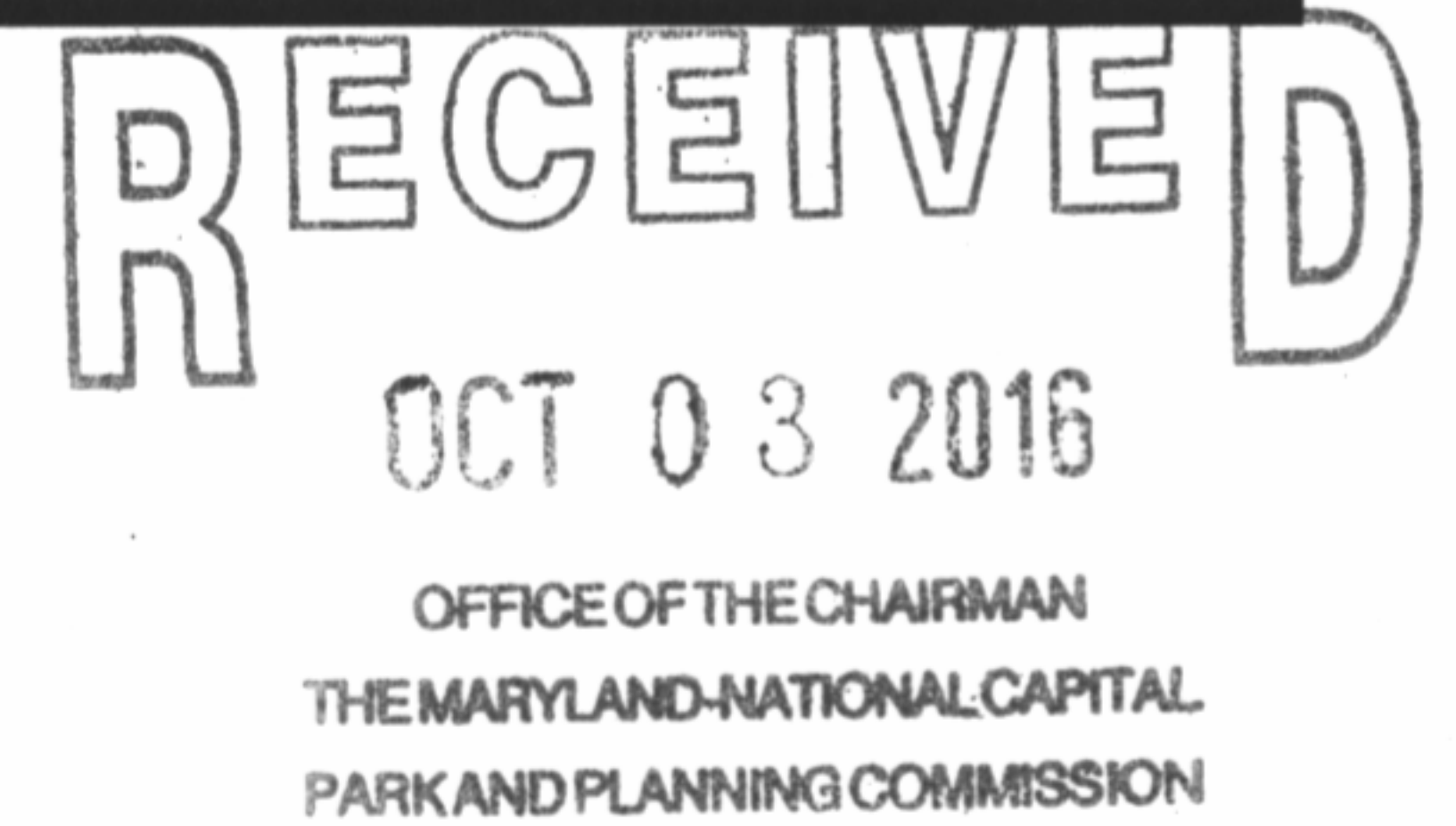
NAME, ADDRESS
Ann and Ted Swett
5227 Farrington Road
Bethesda, MD 20816

Sent from my iPhone

October

MCP-CTRACK

From: Beth Groves <beth.groves@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, October 01, 2016 8:28 AM
To: planning@springfield20816.com
Subject: Equity One Sketch Plan



Dear Mr. Marcolin,
Please help preserve and create green space! Let's not turn Bethesda into a concrete jungle.

Now that Equity One has made their Sketch Plan public, I have the following concerns:

The Willett Branch is not indicated on the plan. The Sector Plan clearly states that the new Willett Branch Stream Valley Park is a core element of the Westbard Sector. Equity One must be required to address it in their design. To leave it out would compromise the whole project. Further, Equity One's commitment to excellent design should embrace the creek rather than turn its back on this unique feature of the Sector.

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The Sector Plan recommends that a cemetery delineation is done behind the Westwood Towers before any development is approved. As there is overwhelming evidence of an African American cemetery dating to the late 1800s, this should be done so that the new park can honor these early residents.

With the support of a strong sketch plan, the Willett Branch has the potential to be a show place for the County and a world class amenity to be enjoyed by everyone. Please support our community by requiring Equity One to create a sketch plan that embraces the new park and our local history.

Beth Groves
4417 Chalfont Place
Bethesda, MD 20816

Sent from my Verizon Wireless iPhone

MCP-CTRACK

From: Vickie Allin <vickie1247@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, October 01, 2016 1:06 PM
To: Marcolin, John; MCP-Chair
Subject: Equity One Sketch Plan

As you know, the County has adopted a plan for the Westbard area that includes a stream valley park with walking paths and green space in the middle of what is now a concrete jungle. I have learned that the developer, Equity One, has submitted a Sketch Plan to the Planning Board to begin development, but is trying to minimize its commitment to the park: it will not commit to providing funds for the park, and the buildings it proposes come close to the stream, far within the stream buffer. ***I ask that you oppose the Equity One Sketch Plan.*** Equity One should not be allowed to weasel out of its commitment to the stream valley park. This park is one of the few ways that Equity One can assuage the concerns of current residents over the mainly negative impacts their development will have on the quality of life in our area!

Please require that Equity One amend its Sketch Plan to provide adequate protection of the stream buffer. This means no new buildings in the 100 foot buffer area on either side of the stream. Equity One must also include in its Sketch Plan a commitment to provide funding for the park as a mandatory public benefit.

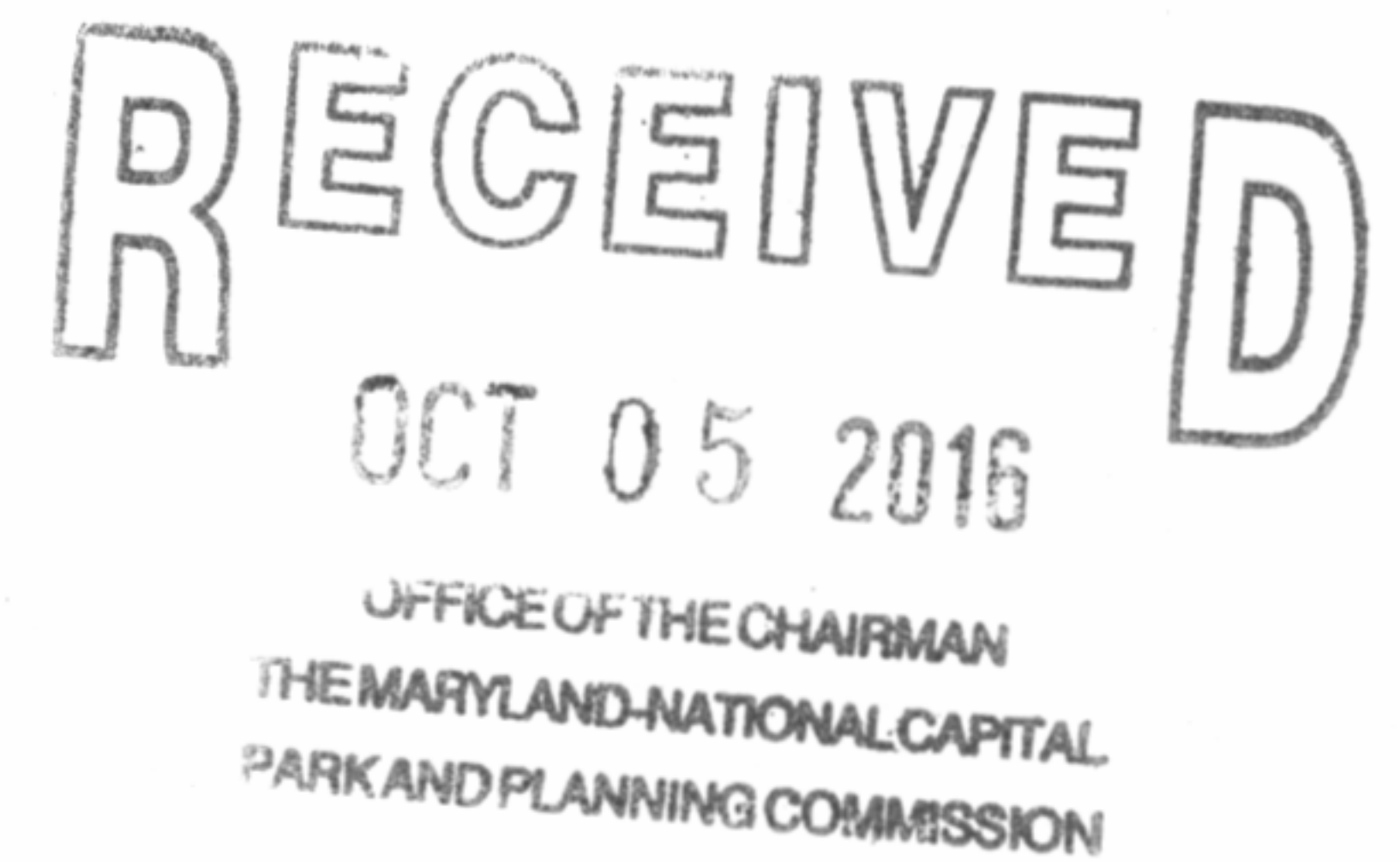
Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this plan.

Sincerely,

Vickie Allin and Lenox Cooper
5032 Allan Road
Bethesda, MD. 20816

MCP-CTRACK

From: Irina Booth <irina.booth@juno.com>
Sent: Wednesday, October 05, 2016 10:59 AM
To: MCP-Chair
Subject: Comments on EquityOne Sketch Plan



Dear Chairman Casey Anderson,

Even though the EquityOne Sketch Plan for the Westwood Shopping Center, and its surroundings, is now filed, please know that the people most affected by the project—the friends and neighbors who live in the area—do NOT support this massive re-development and urbanization project. We requested an updated shopping center, with a reasonable amount of new density (580 new units). We will continue to oppose this out-sized project as it is unreasonable for our suburban community.

In the meantime, here are my initial comments on the Sketch Plan application document:

-The EquityOne Massing Diagram is massive, blocky and unattractive. Even though the residents were told, repeatedly, by you, our MoCo government officials, that Sector Plans are never fully built-out ... that is exactly what is on-tap here.

-The Area Dedicated to Public Use is decreasing dramatically, according to the Sketch Plan's own data. According to page 3 of the Sketch Plan application, the public use area is decreasing from 3.05 acres to 1.69 acres, essentially halving the public use space, while, at the same time, pushing density ever skyward. Something is wrong with this picture. The proposed public use area is excruciatingly tiny and wholly inadequate for the density which is proposed.

Mr. Brown thinks the Sketch Plan will "greatly enhance the Westbard area of the County." We disagree. We did not ask that our suburban community be urbanized in favor of a New York developer.

These are my initial comments only; I will have more comments as the process unfolds and our experts review the plan.

Regards,
Irina Booth
7228 Millwood Ct
Bethesda, MD 20817

MCP-CTRACK

From: Patricia Kolesar <pkoles@verizon.net>
Sent: Sunday, October 09, 2016 3:58 PM
To: MCP-Chair
Subject: EquityOne Sketch Plan is Deeply Flawed

RECEIVED
OCT 10 2016

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Dear Chairman Casey Anderson,

The pending lawsuit speaks for itself. This Sketch Plan draws upon the illegal and void Westbard Sector Plan and thus it has no merit in and of itself.

The overwhelming majority of Westbard-area residents OPPOSE this massive re-development and urbanization project. Westbard-area residents requested an updated shopping center, with a reasonable amount of new density (580 new units). We will continue to oppose this out-sized project as it is unreasonable for our suburban community; we have confidence in our causes of action, as outlined in the pending lawsuit, SaveWestbard Plaintiffs v. MoCo County Council (filed Sept. 19, 2016).

Nevertheless, in order to protect residents' rights in this matter, I offer the following comments:

1. Too Much Density. This has been a common theme since Day 1. Cut this development down, drastically. Our schools and roads cannot handle the stress of this enormous development.
2. Too Little Public Open Space: 1/3 of an acre for the Civic Green? That's rather insignificant for the amount of density proposed. The entirety of the proposed public use area is excruciatingly tiny and wholly inadequate for the proposed density.
3. Westbard Avenue should not have street parking; we're not interested in an off-peak "Bethesda Avenue" traffic pattern. Further, due to the expected traffic congestion, a full, impartial, and detailed traffic analysis should be undertaken immediately.
4. The multi-story above-ground parking lot in the Willett Stream buffer zone will ruin our open vistas and is a detriment to the environment. The disrespect for the environment is profound.
5. Utility lines should be buried.
6. A complete archaeological study should be undertaken to protect the possible desecration of cemeteries.

Residents were told, repeatedly, by you, our MoCo government officials, that Sector Plans are never fully built-out; however, that is exactly what is on-tap here.

Mr. Brown thinks the Sketch Plan will "greatly enhance the Westbard area of the County." We disagree. We did not ask that our suburban community be urbanized in favor of a New York developer.

The comments herein do not constitute acquiescence to or acceptance of the Sketch Plan.

Regards,
Patricia Kolesar
5508 Jordan Rd
Bethesda, MD 20816

MCP-CTRACK

From: Sunil Sabharwal <sunil@sabharwal.biz>
Sent: Sunday, October 09, 2016 5:41 PM
To: MCP-Chair
Subject: EquityOne Sketch Plan is Deeply Flawed

Dear Chairman Casey Anderson,

The pending lawsuit speaks for itself. This Sketch Plan draws upon the illegal and void Westbard Sector Plan and thus it has no merit in and of itself.

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The comments herein do not constitute acquiescence to or acceptance of the Sketch Plan.

Regards,
Sunil Sabharwal
6009 Brookside Dr
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

MCP-CTRACK

From: Heidi Debevoise <Whitney.Debevoise@aporter.com>
Sent: Sunday, October 09, 2016 6:56 PM
To: MCP-Chair
Subject: EquityOne Sketch Plan is Deeply Flawed

Dear Chairman Casey Anderson,

The pending lawsuit speaks for itself. This Sketch Plan draws upon the illegal and void Westbard Sector Plan and thus it has no merit in and of itself.

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The comments herein do not constitute acquiescence to or acceptance of the Sketch Plan.

Regards,
Heidi Debevoise
6408 Elmwood Rd
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

MCP-CTRACK

From: Thomas Maher <jtmaher4000@verizon.net>
Sent: Sunday, October 09, 2016 7:01 PM
To: MCP-Chair
Subject: EquityOne Sketch Plan is Deeply Flawed

Dear Chairman Casey Anderson,

The pending lawsuit speaks for itself. This Sketch Plan draws upon the illegal and void Westbard Sector Plan and thus it has no merit in and of itself.

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The comments herein do not constitute acquiescence to or acceptance of the Sketch Plan.

Regards,
Thomas Maher
5104 Sangamore Rd
Bethesda, MD 20816

MCP-CTRACK

From: Kathryn Scott <kathryns1934@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, October 10, 2016 8:33 AM
To: MCP-Chair
Subject: EquityOne Sketch Plan is Deeply Flawed

Dear Chairman Casey Anderson,

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The comments herein do not constitute acquiescence to or acceptance of the Sketch Plan.

Regards,
Kathryn Scott
5700 Massachusetts Ave
Bethesda, MD 20816

MCP-CTRACK

From: Donna Collins <donnafeey.collins@verizon.net>
Sent: Monday, October 10, 2016 8:35 AM
To: MCP-Chair
Subject: EquityOne Sketch Plan is Deeply Flawed

Dear Chairman Casey Anderson,

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The comments herein do not constitute acquiescence to or acceptance of the Sketch Plan.

Regards,
Donna Collins
6004 Overlea Rd
Bethesda, MD 20816

MCP-CTRACK

From: Adrienne Deming <demingadrienne@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, October 10, 2016 12:50 PM
To: MCP-Chair
Subject: EquityOne Sketch Plan is Deeply Flawed

Dear Chairman Casey Anderson,

The pending lawsuit speaks for itself. This Sketch Plan draws upon the illegal and void Westbard Sector Plan and thus it has no merit in and of itself.

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The comments herein do not constitute acquiescence to or acceptance of the Sketch Plan.

Regards,
Adrienne Deming
5325 Westbard Ave
Bethesda, MD 20816

From: irving lieberman
To: [Marcolin, John](#)
Subject: Equity One Sketch Plan for the Westbard Site
Date: Tuesday, October 11, 2016 2:05:45 PM

Dear Mr. Marcolin,

I am a 14-year neighborhood homeowner and resident in the Westhaven neighborhood next to the Westbard shopping center and adjacent sites to be redeveloped by Equity One. I attended many of the community meetings, the charette, public working sessions, and Planning Board and County Council hearings pertaining to the proposed updating of the Westbard Sector Plan and Equity One's proposed Sketch Plan.

Like most local residents I agree that the shopping center needs to be redeveloped, and that the owner needs financial incentives to justify the capital cost of the improvements. However, I believe the proposed changes to the Sector Plan and Equity One's proposed Sketch Plan go too far in disregard of community needs and desires, and well beyond the capacity of local schools and infrastructure to absorb. This excessive development will overburden local roads, schools, environmental assets such as the Willett Stream, and substantially degrade the quality of life for local residents.

Flaws in the plan include:

1. Far too much density of both commercial space and residential units. Schools are already overcrowded and local traffic has grown measurably worse in recent years--*before* 1,400 more residential units are added. The developers can add 560+ units of additional housing under existing zoning. Why is this not sufficient? The county's "quick estimate" of increased school population looks like a ridiculous underestimate of the impact of 1,400 additional units.
2. The lack of an environmental impact study on the projected effects of what's been proposed.
3. Far less public open space than what was presented by the developer and county in community meetings. Postage-stamp "parks" provide very little amenity space to what will be a much more densely populated neighborhood.
4. Westbard Ave. should not have street parking. We've seen the gridlocked effects of similar changes made on Bethesda Ave. and the neighborhood cut-through traffic this spawns. This area is a long-standing neighborhood of single family homes, townhouses, and a few multi-family developments. It is not a commercial hub, and longtime residents don't want it turned into one. This is *our* neighborhood, not the County's asset, for which residents' quality of life concerns can be ignored. We own the homes, pay the mortgages and taxes, volunteer at the schools, and fund the community services like the local rescue and ambulance services. Planners and elected officials should heed the oft-expressed desires of community residents to oppose changes that would degrade the quality of life for those who live here. A full traffic study, as required by law, should be conducted before important changes are imposed on the neighborhood.
5. Utility lines for all redevelopment should be buried. This neighborhood was ground zero for many years for recurring power outages during storms due to above-ground utility lines. Many of us lobbied Pepco and government agencies (and agreed to pay for) burying

residential utility lines (to no avail). Instead, we had to put in generator systems at significant cost. It is inconceivable that new developments would be allowed to continue this irresponsible approach when the incremental costs of burying the lines would be a small part of development costs.

6. There should be no construction allowed in the Willett Stream buffer zone. This will be detrimental to the environment.

Thank you for your consideration.

Irving and Judith Lieberman
5305 Wriley Rd. (Westhaven)
Bethesda, MD 20816



Date: October 11, 2016

To: John Marcolin, Montgomery Park and Planning
Susanne Paul, Montgomery Parks
Robert Kronenberg, Montgomery Park and Planning

From: Sarah Morse, Executive Director, Little Falls Watershed Alliance

Re: Equity One Sketch Plan: Legality of Buildings in the Stream Buffer

To Members of the Planning Staff:

After a careful review of Maryland Law, M-NCPPC Environmental Guidelines, the Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance, the Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan, the Incentive Density Implementation Guide, and the Westbard Sector Plan and Appendix, Little Falls Watershed Alliance feels there are serious legal concerns with the Sketch Plan revision submitted by Equity One. It is our belief that these documents mandate that Equity One should not—and may not—construct new buildings in the stream buffer. Further, the documents show that Equity One must dedicate land and substantial funds to support the greenway park early in the development process, and the buildings adjacent to the park must be designed to be attractive and welcoming to park users.

Our review reveals:

1. The Willett Branch buffer must be preserved from encroachment.

a. *Maryland Code, Natural Resources Section 8-1801+ and M-NCPPC Environmental Guidelines*

- i. The guidelines treat streams as sensitive areas needing protection from the negative consequences of development, and therefore prohibit buildings in stream buffers; only necessary, minimized infrastructure is allowed. (p.17) State law also protects the buffer as part of restoration of the Bay, stating that new development activity in the buffer is “inimical” to the purposes of preserving water quality and habitats.

The proposed buildings would substantially invade the buffer, violating state law and local guidelines.

- ii. Exceptions must meet five tests: that reasonable alternatives to encroachment do not exist; encroachment has been minimized; existing sensitive areas such as buffers, streams, and floodplains are avoided; the proposal is consistent with the preferred use of the buffer; and the plan includes compensation for any buffer loss. (p.19)

The proposed buffer encroachment is so great it cannot be justified under these tests. Its extent is not reasonable, nor is it minimized. Buildings would cover existing sensitive areas. The proposal is also not consistent with the park, which is the preferred use of the buffer. Furthermore, there is no mention of compensation for buffer intrusion in the Sector Plan.

- iii. The guidelines show “special concern” for protecting steep slopes to avoid erosion that would affect stream water quality. (p.3,23)

Most of the proposed buildings would be constructed at the top of very steep slopes. Special concern would dictate that Equity One be required to stabilize any slopes disturbed during construction and continue to maintain them, whether or not it has dedicated the underlying land.

- iv. The Environmental Guidelines require the Sector Plan and zoning laws to ensure that desired densities can be constructed only on “unconstrained areas” within a site. (p.2)

The balancing test in the Sector Plan could therefore not have been meant to allow the enormous encroachment proposed by Equity One.

- v. Any Planning Board waivers must show “unreasonable hardship” and provide county benefits. (p.44)

Equity One’s massive encroachments cannot meet an unreasonable hardship test. Equity One has made no demonstration of hardship to the public, and yet it must meet the burden of proof. The Planning Board must honor the public’s trust in it, and make the Environmental Guidelines the rule, rather than the exception.

b. Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance

- i. The Zoning Ordinance was passed to “promote the conservation of natural resources,” and to “promote or facilitate adequate . . . parks,” etc. (Section 1.2.1) The usable area for development can include only up to 50% of a property, and is reduced if the buffer area is greater than 50%. (Section 1.4.2)

This ordinance is therefore clear that the buffer must be respected, and should be free of construction.

- ii. Variances from the zoning rules into buffer areas must not “substantially impair the master plan or be adverse to the use and enjoyment of abutting properties.” (Section 7.3.2)

Equity One’s intrusion into the buffer would substantially reduce the size of the stream valley park—central to the Sector Plan—and would lessen the enjoyment of that park.

- c. **The Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan** sets forth goals for a hierarchy of parks in each sector, including wooded areas with trails that provide connectivity. It relies on **Vision 2030**, which emphasizes the need for parks and trails downcounty in urbanized areas. The Sector Plan explicitly relies on the both plans.

- i. The PROS Plan aims to protect sensitive areas, such as streams, to meet state goals to clean up the Bay and conserve natural resources. (p.71,83)

Equity One’s proposed encroachment will not meet state or local environmental goals, or the PROS Plan.

- ii. The Plan recognizes the need for stream valley parks that include substantial land around the stream for wildlife, trails, and other activities, especially in urbanized areas like Westbard. (p.45-47)

Equity One ignores this need, by drastically proposing to encroach on the buffer and therefore reduce the amount of land for a stream valley park on the south/west side of the stream to practically nothing.

- d. The Sector Plan.** The Sector Plan repeatedly makes a substantial, vibrant stream valley park the central feature in the Westbard Sector, and describes it as “a regional gem in the Montgomery County park and trail system.” (p.100)

- i.* The stream valley park is the only large green, open space in the Sector Plan—“the primary community asset.” (p.19). The Appendix references the state and county environmental laws, noting that the Sector Plan recommendations “are predicated on the statutory framework and guidance stating that sensitive areas must be protected and redevelopment cannot occur in the stream buffer.” (p.83)

Equity One should not be able to so thoroughly minimize this park essential to the Sector Plan by deep encroachment into the stream buffer by its buildings along the stream.

- ii.* Although there is balancing language in the Sector Plan to allow for some redevelopment in the buffer, the other side of the test is the need to create attractive green spaces that improve stream ecology. (p.57,75,101)

Equity One’s massive buffer encroachment ignores any balance in favor of the stream valley. New buildings should not go beyond the footprints of existing buildings (not including surface parking)—if that.

- iii.* The Sector Plan states that impervious surfaces for roads and parking should be reduced and replaced with shaded, more inviting and healthier landscape.” (p.57) The Appendix states that “buffers must be reclaimed from the built environment in order to facilitate the Willett Branch Greenway.” (p.69) “Roads, buildings, parking lots or similar types of permanent structures should be minimized within the stream buffer and carefully designed to complement the greenway park.” (p. 70)

Instead of naturalizing surface parking along the stream, the Sketch Plan proposes using the surface lots on these properties to expand the footprint of the proposed new buildings, in violation of the Sector Plan.

2. Equity One must commit in their Sketch Plan to providing the stream valley park as a public benefit in Phase One, including land dedication and sufficient funds to develop the park.

a. Incentive Density Implementation Guide

- i.* The Guide lists a “park” as a Major Public Facility, stating: if a master plan recommends a major public facility on a property, then the Sketch Plan applicant “must provide the major public facility.”(Section 4.7.3.A.2)

The Equity One Sketch Plan does not show the park area as a public benefit, and the developer does not commit to providing funds for the park. Both are needed, in addition to land dedication.

- ii.* The Guide discusses advance dedication of land for easements. (Section 4.7.3.C. 1)

The planning staff should ensure advance dedication of the land for the park, so that it is not contingent on whether any specific site is developed.

b. Sector Plan

- i. The Sector Plan lists expected public amenities and benefits: the naturalization of the Willett Branch, creation of the greenway with a trail, and dedication of the stream in order to meet those goals. (p.98-99) The Appendix states that the park will include naturalization, trails, restored wetlands with boardwalks, interpretive signage, seating, and Wi-Fi access. (p.102)

Equity One should dedicate land for the park in the first phase of development, and be responsible for the costs of stream naturalization, trails, and the other amenities mentioned above on the property it dedicates.

- ii. The Sector Plan notes that the Westbard II and Bowlmor sites were given additional heights due to constraints on the land. (p.71-72)

Equity One therefore has received benefits for its project, and needs to provide public benefits in return.

c. Environmental Regulations

- i. To the extent the buffer is encroached upon, Equity One must compensate for that encroachment elsewhere in the stream valley. (p.2) The Appendix to the Sector Plan recognizes this, stating that because encroachment of the buffer may be allowed at Westwood II, it “would need to be offset by supplemental environmental enhancements in other portions of the stream.” (Section C.4.10)

This means Equity One must dedicate funds in advance to compensate for any buffer encroachment, in addition to funds for creating the park.

3. Equity One’s buildings adjacent to the buffer must be attractive and embrace the stream.**a. PROS Plan**

- i. The PROS Plan hierarchy requires each building to provide “outdoor recreation space to serve the residents of that building.” (p.5)

The buildings along the Willett Branch should therefore be designed to face and embrace the stream, pulling residents out into nature.

- ii. The PROS Plan states that “urban open space systems should support a vibrant and sustainable urban center by creating open spaces that will be comfortable, attractive, easily accessible, and provide a range of experiences,” (p.5) Parks enhance health and “the quality of community life by providing visual relief from the built environment, a sense of place, and an opportunity to connect with community and nature, and space to gather, play and celebrate.” (p.18-19)

Equity One’s buildings come so close to the stream that they cannot create a sense of place or a range of experiences behind them. The two buildings behind and beside Westwood Tower visually and physically block access to the stream. All the buildings disturb the sense of nature for visitors. Please look at the buildings along the Little Falls Branch on Willard Avenue in Bethesda for an example of the canyon-like wall created by multi-storied buildings built within 30 feet of a creek.

b. Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance

- i. Multi-use buildings allowed in CR-type zones should include “Retail/Service Establishments along the majority of the ground floor facing any street or open space and other nonresidential uses.” (Section 4.1.5)

Equity One is therefore required to make the ground floor of its new construction embrace the park. Visitors to the park should not see the backs of buildings.

- ii. All CR zones are required to integrate a variety of uses with public amenities appropriate to the setting and implement the recommendations of master plans. CRT zones should be pedestrian-oriented with limited ground floor footprints. (Section 4.51)

Equity One must construct buildings that keep the scale and purpose of the sector in mind, therefore better assimilating them into the park. Its Sketch Plan does not meet the CRT zone requirements.

- iii. An apartment building swimming pool, such as the one on the proposed Westwood Tower garage, does not appear to be a permitted use in the CRT zone. (Chapter 59-3)

Equity One would have to apply for a waiver for this use. The pool proposed by Equity One does not belong in the stream buffer, or in the zone at all. Its use on top of the garage extends the footprint unnecessarily into the buffer and blocks access to the stream valley park.

c. Incentive Density Implementation Guide

- i. This Guide states that “high quality design is important in urban, integrated-use settings . . . [and] helps attract residents, patrons, and businesses to these areas. (p.33) The Guide defines exceptional design as a “site design whose visual and functional impacts exceptionally enhance the character of a setting,” which includes “creating a sense of place;” “enhancing the public realm in a distinct and original matter;” and “designing compact, infill development so living, working and shopping environments are more pleasurable and desirable on a problematic site.” (Section 4.7.3.E.2)

Equity One dropped exceptional design from its list of public benefits, but quality design should be expected in the Westbard area. Not only should the buildings harmoniously embrace the stream, but there should be areas along the stream used for gathering and special areas set aside as entrances to the park.

- ii. The Guide notes that the “quality of the built environment affects light, shadow, wind, and noise, as well as the functional and economic value of property.” (p.33)

The proposed buildings would be so close to the stream that they will damage the stream valley park with noise and shadow, and overwhelm the space, detracting from public use of the park.

- iii. The Guide provides for public benefits in other aspects of quality design, including desirable architectural elevations and setbacks, historic resource protection [such as the cemetery], public open space, public art, tower step-back, and others. (Section 4.7.3.E)

None of these are mentioned in the Sketch Plan, and all are important for such a massive project.

d. Sector Plan

- i. The Sector Plan stresses that the greenway paths should be high quality, inviting, and improve connectivity between nature and the variety of spaces in Westbard. (p. 33,49,51) The Appendix notes that the park would “increase opportunities for social interaction, and increase property values.” (p.108) The Sector Plan stresses the importance of “placemaking” to “activate” buildings and open spaces. (p.54) and calls for improvements like a “landscaped pocket park,” and for the stream to “serve as an amenity for adjacent development.” (p.76)

Equity One’s plan for buildings immediately adjacent to the stream will automatically reduce the attractiveness of the park and trails, creating a walled canyon. The buildings block park access, reduce connectivity, and limit spaces for social interaction. They ignore any sense of placemaking.

- ii. The Appendix calls for limiting the use of fencing and walls to make the area by the stream as natural as possible, and to have crossings naturalized with space for wildlife passage.

Equity One's plan leaves almost no space for wildlife, and proposes walls of buildings that are not integrated into the environment.

- iii. The Sector Plan notes that the greenway is important enough to receive Legacy Open Space (LOS) designation (p.101). The Appendix further notes that the park meets the LOS criteria "to increase access to open space and recreation in dense urban communities, to promote interconnectivity of the urban green infrastructure, and to provide community open space for casual use and large community gatherings." (p.93)

Equity One's buildings must comply with this vision.

4. Site-Specific Issues

a. **Westwood Tower parking garage:**

The area behind Westwood Tower is the heart of the plan for a new park, being the widest space in the currently developable property and the site of an African American cemetery. It should become a major, welcoming access point to the stream area, as shown in the maps on pages 12 and 50 of the Sector Plan. A garage and pool must not be permitted in the buffer in this location.

- i. The FEMA flood plain covers almost the entire site of the proposed garage, and therefore prohibits its construction.
- ii. The Sector Plan contemplates redevelopment only on parcel 4b of the Westwood Tower site—not on parcel 4a, where the existing Westwood Tower stands. The Sector Plan further recognizes that "a significant portion of the site [behind Westwood Tower] is restricted by environmental constraints such as a stream buffer and flood plain," (p. 72) implying that no new building should be there. The Plan further states that parts of the Westwood Tower parcels 238, 240, and 175 should be designated "as a floodplain area and as a stream naturalization/amenity area for development within Westbard." (p.76)
- iii. The area behind and adjacent to the building was a cemetery from 1911 until it was sold in 1958. There are no records that the graves have been moved and oral testimony suggests that they were not. Using this area for a parking garage is inappropriate and not supported by the Sector Plan. The Sector Plan specifically suggests providing "a landscape setting in this location that is respectful of site history." (p.76)
- iv. The Sector Plan also requires a rebuilt pedestrian crossing on that site, which will not easily link to Westbard Avenue if the parking garage blocks access to it. (p.76)
- v. The garage would be built on a steeply sloping site currently covered with surface parking. Construction here would cause erosion. The Sector Plan envisions returning the current surface parking lot to nature—not using it for a new structure. (p.57,76)
- vi. Further, the County Council did not place an exception for the garage in the Sector Plan or adopt language proposed by the HOC regarding the garage structure. The Sector Plan maps do not show a garage or other structure behind Westwood Tower. (p. 12,13,50,52,54,68,74)
- vii. Other guidance on parking in the Sector Plan favors underground parking and street parking for retail shoppers, rather than above-ground structured parking. (p.74) The American Plant Food site, also adjacent to the stream, is required to screen any parking structure with residential or retail spaces, which should be a model for all redevelopment. (p.80) This model is not possible at the Westwood Tower site.

- viii.* The parking garage, with the accompanying exhaust and noise, will prevent the park from being attractive, stress-free, and quiet for users, as contemplated by the Sector Plan and the PROS Plan.
- ix.* The balancing test allows recommended redevelopment that is necessary, and this garage was neither recommended, nor is it necessary.

b. Bowlmor Site:

The Bowlmor site is steeply sloped and new buildings must be spaced back from the buffer to 150 feet to prevent erosion in the creek valley.

- i.* The original footprint was already partially in the buffer. The massive size of the proposed building goes deep into the buffer, on land that slopes quickly downhill toward Westwood Tower and the stream. Neither the site nor the proposed size of the building are appropriate for this parcel.
- ii.* The proposed building will be constructed at the top of a very steep slope backing the stream, and will ultimately destabilize that slope. A building in this area is contrary to the Environmental Guidelines, which recommend a 150-foot buffer in areas with steep slopes.
- iii.* The Sector Plan Appendix notes that soils on the site are manmade with fill, and would require extensive stabilization. (Section C.4.15) Allowing construction to the edge of the slope is therefore dangerous and probably costly.
- iv.* The initial proposal by Equity One was for a 125-foot structure. When the height was cut to 110 feet, the FAR was not reduced as it should have been to keep prohibit so much buffer encroachment. It is important that this oversight not be used as rationale for encroaching in the buffer.
- v.* The Sector Plan envisions naturalizing surface parking in the sector, (p.57,76) such as the parking around the current building, and not using that area as a building site.

c. Westwood II:

While some encroachment of the buffer was contemplated here to the extent of the existing footprint, the amount of encroachment proposed by Equity One is far too great.

- i.* At the Planning Board, the new building had an allowed height of 90 feet. The Council's reduction to 75 feet, should not therefore permit expansion of the footprint deeper into the buffer. The FAR should have been reduced as well. Again, like the Bowlmor site, this oversight should not be used as rationale for allowing building deep into the buffer.
- ii.* The proposed building will be constructed at the top of a very steep slope, which will ultimately destabilize the slope. Environmental Regulations prohibit building on steep slope for this reason.
- iii.* Some of the proposed site is in the FEMA floodplain and therefore should prohibit construction.
- iv.* The Sector Plan, in general, anticipated changing surface parking to naturalized areas. (p.57,76) The Appendix says of the Westwood II site that "the non-developed area surrounding the stream should be widened and re-naturalized as redevelopment takes place," (p. 59) indicating that construction on the stream buffer was not anticipated beyond the footprint of the current building.
- v.* The Appendix further calls for "buffer and stream enhancements... to the extent possible within the stream valley buffer" and an amenity area with naturalized elements. (Section C.4.10) It proposes a pocket park for dining and seating by a waterfall at this setting, which would be impossible if the building is constructed deep into the buffer.

d. Manor Care:

The Manor Care site is available for townhouses, but there is a tributary to the Willett Branch along the edge adjacent to River Road. The Sector Plan did not contemplate construction within that part of the site.

- i.* Some of the proposed townhouses would be constructed completely within the buffer, if not in the floodplain on that part of the site. This is not acceptable.
- ii.* The Sector Plan noted that the tributary to Willett Branch is less than six feet from the road, with invasive plants and sediment blocking the culvert. It calls for restoration of this site, along with the adjacent parcel 902. (p.75) Townhouses do not belong here.
- iii.* The Sector Plan calls for removing the linear parking lot on the Manor Care site, and reforesting it, to stabilize the stream. (p.76) Townhouses in this area would make this plan impossible.
- iv.* The Appendix also calls for “comprehensive stream naturalization” on the site, and for daylighting the stream to make it a focus of the public open space on the site. (Section C.4.9) Again, townhouses would not be consistent with this vision.
- v.* The Zoning Ordinance calls for common open space for townhouses that is at least 50 feet wide, and it must meet other size specifications. (Section 6.3.5) The proposed townhouses in the stream bed would reduce the available open space on the site, and may not conform to the regulations.

Thank you for your attention to these points. We are grateful to the Planning Staff’s commitment to the naturalization of the Willett Branch and formation of the new park. It will be a real asset to the community and a show piece for Montgomery County. We look forward to seeing it to fruition.

Sarah Morse
Executive Director
Little Falls Watershed Alliance
301-907-3298

MCP-CTRACK

From: Eugene Zartman <ezarterz@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 11, 2016 2:22 PM
To: MCP-Chair
Subject: EquityOne Sketch Plan is Deeply Flawed

RECEIVED
OCT 11 2016

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Dear Chairman Casey Anderson,

The pending lawsuit speaks for itself. This Sketch Plan draws upon the illegal and void Westbard Sector Plan and thus it has no merit in and of itself.

The overwhelming majority of Westbard-area residents OPPOSE this massive re-development and urbanization project. Westbard-area residents requested an updated shopping center, with a reasonable amount of new density (580 new units). We will continue to oppose this out-sized project as it is unreasonable for our suburban community; we have confidence in our causes of action, as outlined in the pending lawsuit, Save Westbard Plaintiffs v. MoCo County Council (filed Sept. 19, 2016).

Nevertheless, in order to protect residents' rights in this matter, I offer the following comments:

1. Too Much Density. This has been a common theme since Day 1. Cut this development down, drastically. Our schools and roads cannot handle the stress of this enormous development.
2. Too Little Public Open Space: 1/3 of an acre for the Civic Green? That's rather insignificant for the amount of density proposed. The entirety of the proposed public use area is excruciatingly tiny and wholly inadequate for the proposed density.
3. Westbard Avenue should not have street parking; we're not interested in an off-peak "Bethesda Avenue" traffic pattern. Further, due to the expected traffic congestion, a full, impartial, and detailed traffic analysis should be undertaken immediately.
4. The multi-story above-ground parking lot in the Willett Stream buffer zone will ruin our open vistas and is a detriment to the environment. The disrespect for the environment is profound.
5. Utility lines should be buried.
6. A complete archaeological study should be undertaken to protect the possible desecration of cemeteries.

Residents were told, repeatedly, by you, our MoCo government officials, that Sector Plans are never fully built-out; however, that is exactly what is on-tap here.

Mr. Brown thinks the Sketch Plan will "greatly enhance the Westbard area of the County." We disagree. We did not ask that our suburban community be urbanized in favor of a New York developer.

The comments herein do not constitute acquiescence to or acceptance of the Sketch Plan.

Regards,
Eugene Zartman
5601 Pioneer Ln
Bethesda, MD 20816

MCP-CTRACK

From: William Smith <paulsmithjr@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 11, 2016 2:29 PM
To: MCP-Chair
Subject: EquityOne Sketch Plan is Deeply Flawed

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Regards,
William Smith
6117 Massachusetts Ave
Bethesda, MD 20816

From: T. Reid Lewis
To: planning@springfield20816.com
Subject: Protect County's Groundwater with Willett Branch Restoration
Date: Saturday, October 15, 2016 12:22:12 PM

President Floreen, and
Members of the Montgomery County Council
Council Office Building
100 Maryland Avenue, 5th Floor
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear President Floreen,

I'm writing to express my gratitude for your vote and the vote of every council member in favor of creating the Willett Branch Stream Park. This park offers benefits to public health, the environment, and the social fabric of our community. Parks promote ecosystem services, such as improved air and water quality and can provide avenues for economic development, and are therefore incredible assets in the Westbard Sector Plan. I am glad the council agrees with me on this.

Support for the Willett Branch Stream Park is a wise decision as it will help to protect our groundwater from contamination and depletion.

It is estimated that the US withdraws 79.6 billion gallons of groundwater on a daily basis. This water is largely used to provide drinking water in mostly rural areas, to help grow our food, and in industrial processes. In 2014, 1.9 million people in Maryland relied heavily on groundwater as their main source of drinking water. The state's next biggest uses for groundwater are irrigation and industry. Fortunately, the water quality in Montgomery county's groundwater is not contaminated. However the state's general groundwater contains levels of arsenic, radium, radon, and chlorinated salt. Groundwater contaminants can reach communities through seepage into streambeds of rivers and streams as well as through drinking water. These contaminants can negatively impact the economy, threaten public health in communities, and degrade soil that is vital to maintain stream and river ecosystems. It is therefore in the best interest of the county and the Sector to protect our groundwater in ways that are proactive and cost-effective; restoring and maintaining Willett Branch Stream Park is a way to do this.

Groundwater depletion is defined by the USGS as "long-term water-level declines caused by sustained groundwater pumping." It is a key issue concerning groundwater use in many parts of the US. It occurs when groundwater pumping rates exceeds its replenishment. Consequences of groundwater depletion include drying up of wells, decrease in water volume in streams and lakes, reduction of water quality, increased costs for water withdrawal, and land subsidence (the settling or sinking of the Earth's surface). Groundwater depletion research in California suggests that costs related to these consequences can be prohibitively high. They include \$756 million in Santa Clara Valley to fix damages resulting from subsidence and \$9 million in Fresno spent on electricity to pump groundwater during the drought in 2011.

An effective way to protect groundwater while restoring watersheds is through the creation and maintenance of riparian buffer zones, or naturally vegetated or restored lands that are adjacent to rivers. These zones prevent groundwater depletion by allowing precipitation and runoff to infiltrate the soil and pass through to the water table. The soil in these zones is a highly porous medium that absorbs precipitation while slowing down the flow of surface water runoff. These zones also protect groundwater from contamination because the vegetation and soil filter entering water by absorbing nutrients, sediment, and pollutants. Vegetation serves as an absorber of excess nutrients and heavy metals while soil bacteria down nutrients, metals, and pollutants. Currently, the streamlined concrete-bed and non-restored stream-adjacent lands serve as a barrier to replenishing groundwater supply and keeping our water clean along the Willett Branch Stream.

The ecosystem services provided by watershed restoration and groundwater protection include surface water filtration, wastewater treatment, and conservation of naturally occurring ecosystems. Compared to reactive and constructed water treatment systems such as water filtration plants and wastewater treatment centers, watershed restoration and the creation of riparian buffers through the creation and maintenance of parks has significantly lower costs. For example, the estimated capital and operating costs to filter drinking water in New York City are \$8-10 billion through filtration plants, and only \$1.5 billion using watershed conservation techniques.

A naturalized stream-bed, such as the one we will see in Willett Branch Stream Park, will allow water to soak into the ground to replenish groundwater. This process will help the ecosystem, maintain our soil's integrity and ensure that we have clean fresh water access into the future. It will also prevent the sector from having to invest large sums of money into the future to protect and maintain water quality and access.

Thank you for your vote for Willett Branch Stream Park. Your continued support for this unique opportunity to create a park will contribute to the positive legacy of our Sector forever!

Sincerely,

- Reid

T. Reid Lewis
Springfield Neighborhood
Bethesda, MD 20816 USA

From: Eleni Dorian
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: EquityOne Sketch Plan is Deeply Flawed
Date: Monday, October 17, 2016 11:06:40 PM

Dear Chairman Casey Anderson,

The pending lawsuit speaks for itself. This Sketch Plan draws upon the illegal and void Westbard Sector Plan and thus it has no merit in and of itself.

The overwhelming majority of Westbard-area residents OPPOSE this massive re-development and urbanization project. Westbard-area residents requested an updated shopping center, with a reasonable amount of new density (580 new units). We will continue to oppose this out-sized project as it is unreasonable for our suburban community; we have confidence in our causes of action, as outlined in the pending lawsuit, SaveWestbard Plaintiffs v. MoCo County Council (filed Sept. 19, 2016).

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Regards,
Eleni Dorian
6201 Benalder Dr
Bethesda, MD 20816

From: Sandra Aresta
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: EquityOne Sketch Plan is Deeply Flawed
Date: Sunday, October 16, 2016 3:18:51 PM

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1. Too Much Density. This has been a common theme since Day 1. Cut this development down, drastically. Our schools and roads cannot handle the stress of this enormous development.
2. Too Little Public Open Space: 1/3 of an acre for the Civic Green? That's rather insignificant for the amount of density proposed. The entirety of the proposed public use area is excruciatingly tiny and wholly inadequate for the proposed density.
3. Westbard Avenue should not have street parking; we're not interested in an off-peak "Bethesda Avenue" traffic pattern. Further, due to the expected traffic congestion, a full, impartial, and detailed traffic analysis should be undertaken immediately.
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5. Utility lines should be buried.
6. A complete archaeological study should be undertaken to protect the possible desecration of cemeteries.

Residents were told, repeatedly, by you, our MoCo government officials, that Sector Plans are never fully built-out; however, that is exactly what is on-tap here.

Mr. Brown thinks the Sketch Plan will "greatly enhance the Westbard area of the County." We disagree. We did not ask that our suburban community be urbanized in favor of a New York developer.

The comments herein do not constitute acquiescence to or acceptance of the Sketch Plan.

Regards,
Sandra Aresta
4704 Chevy Chase Blvd
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

From: Maurice Heartfield
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: EquityOne Sketch Plan is Deeply Flawed
Date: Monday, October 17, 2016 10:55:54 PM

Dear Chairman Casey Anderson,

The pending lawsuit speaks for itself. This Sketch Plan draws upon the illegal and void Westbard Sector Plan and thus it has no merit in and of itself.

The overwhelming majority of Westbard-area residents OPPOSE this massive re-development and urbanization project. Westbard-area residents requested an updated shopping center, with a reasonable amount of new density (580 new units). We will continue to oppose this out-sized project as it is unreasonable for our suburban community; we have confidence in our causes of action, as outlined in the pending lawsuit, SaveWestbard Plaintiffs v. MoCo County Council (filed Sept. 19, 2016).

Nevertheless, in order to protect residents' rights in this matter, I offer the following comments:

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Mr. Brown thinks the Sketch Plan will "greatly enhance the Westbard area of the County." We disagree. We did not ask that our suburban community be urbanized in favor of a New York developer.

The comments herein do not constitute acquiescence to or acceptance of the Sketch Plan.

Regards,
Maurice Heartfield
5133 Westpath Way
Bethesda, MD 20816



October 17, 2016

Dear Mr. Anderson, Mr. Kronenberg, Ms. Wright, Mr. Marcolin, Ms. Paul, and Councilmembers and Staff:

The pending lawsuit, *SaveWestbard Plaintiffs v. MoCo County Council* (filed Sept. 19, 2016) speaks for itself. For the procedural and substantive reasons set forth in the Complaint, the Westbard Sector Plan is null and void, illegal and defunct. As such, the Equity One Sketch Plan – currently under review by the Planning Board – is invalid as it draws upon the legally defective Westbard Sector Plan.

Nevertheless, in order to protect residents' rights in this matter, and because the Planning Board is currently reviewing the proposed Equity One Sketch Plan, which may be vacated shortly, we offer the comments below in good faith.

The comments herein do not constitute SaveWestbard's acquiescence to or acceptance of the legal validity of the Westbard Sector Plan or of the proposed Equity One Sketch Plan.

Community Survey, October 6-11, 2016:

From 6:00 a.m. on October 6, 2016 through 3:00 p.m. on October 11, 2016, the Westbard community actively participated in a [Community Survey](#) which directly addressed the proposed Sketch Plan details. Three hundred and sixty-two Westbard-area residents completed the survey – a statistically significant level of response relative to the size of the surrounding community.

Generally speaking, local opinion remains unchanged [since May, 2016](#). The survey demonstrates that 93% of Westbard-area residents reject the building heights and densities set forth in the proposed Equity One Sketch Plan. The full survey results (which display the actual questions) are linked [here](#); although the names and addresses of our 362 Westbard-area respondents have been withheld for privacy reasons. If you would like to confirm that all respondents are Westbard-area residents, we would be pleased to show the related

documentation to you, but it may not be copied or shared. Further substantiation for the credibility of the survey results may be found in the [Survey Methodology Statement](#).

The overwhelming majority of Westbard-area residents oppose this massive re-development and urbanization project. Westbard-area residents request/have requested an updated shopping center, with a reasonable amount of new density (580 new units). Despite known and quantifiable resident opposition, however, majority opinion has been thwarted by the Planning Board and the County Council to-date.

Sketch Plan Particulars in light of the Community Survey:

1. Too Much Density (93.37% agreement). 93.37% of respondents agree with the statement that “Massing is too dense/tall and is incompatible with the adjoining development.” This finding refutes the Sketch Plan narrative, which states that proposed massing is compatible with surrounding development.

The survey finding on massing echoes the overwhelming majority of density-specific comments and written statements submitted to the Planning Department, the Planning Board, and the County Council during this entire process. Opposition to the unreasonable density dump has been residents’ number one, unifying theme, since the very inception of this process. Our schools and roads simply cannot handle the stress of this high-density, enormous development. Moreover, quantifiable community reaction, pursuant to the survey, reveals that these concerns have not been allayed.

Regarding traffic congestion in particular: The lack of a formal traffic study and the lack of a formal environmental assessment regarding the effect of this proposed development upon greenhouse gas emissions and vehicle miles traveled represents a fiduciary and statutory failure on your part. Given that the Sketch Plan proposes to deliver an estimated 1.8 million square feet of residential and retail space and on-site parking for 2,079 to 4,013 vehicles, formal environmental and traffic studies are imperative.

Westbard residents’ real-time experience and collective common sense may readily confirm the following for you: Traffic congestion and school over-crowding already exist in our community; hence, the continuous community opposition to Equity One’s plans for our community. This on-going community opposition to building height and density proposed in the Sketch Plan demonstrates that proposed massing should be reduced to provide for mixed-use redevelopment at Westbard at building height and density levels acceptable to the surrounding community.

2. Too Little Public Open Space (94.75% agreement). 94.75% of respondents agree with the statement that “Far too little public open space is proposed in light of the scale of proposed development and the goal of the Westbard sector plan to create public recreational, gathering and relaxation spaces.”

The Sketch Plan offers a mere one-third acre Civic Green for the residents. Further, the entirety of proposed public space will shrink by 45% from what is currently provided (from 3.05 acres to 1.69 acres). The proposed public use area is excruciatingly tiny and wholly inadequate for the proposed density, and it does not meaningfully realize the objective of the *illegal* Westbard Sector Plan to “add a network of green open spaces connected by trails and bikeways that provides places for outdoor recreation, gathering and relaxation.”

All too frequently, Bethesda routinely loses its green space to developers. In this context, we reference the [Protect Bethesda Open Space](#) campaign which focuses on this issue for downtown Bethesda. In the wider community, engaged residents recognize that Montgomery County thirsts for Bethesda/Chevy Chase taxpayers, thus requiring that open space in the Bethesda/Chevy Chase area be rendered “profitable” – i.e., developed beyond repair and stuffed with future taxpayers; hence, the evaporation of green space in our Bethesda/Chevy Chase communities. Please protect Bethesda open space.

3. Traffic Study Needed due to Increased Traffic/Road Re-design (93.65% agreement). 93.65% of respondents agree with the statement that “Proposed onsite traffic and street redesign could increase road traffic and congestion, and encourage drivers to seek alternative routes through neighborhoods. A detailed traffic study is needed before approving the proposal.”

Community views on this subject are consistent with residents’ comments and statements to the Planning Department, the Planning Board and the County Council during the entire process, which overwhelmingly expressed concerns about aggravating already excessive traffic congestion. Westbard Avenue is the primary thoroughfare serving the proposed development and serves a key role in providing access to River Road and Massachusetts Avenue for surrounding neighborhoods. Survey results demonstrate that neither the *illegal* Westbard Sector Plan nor the proposed Sketch Plan allay residents’ concerns that the proposed redesign of Westbard Avenue will impede traffic flow.

SaveWestbard is concerned that the proposed Sketch plan will impede vehicle access and traffic flow along Westbard Avenue by installing 13 foot sidewalks, new bicycle paths (5 feet on each side of the road) and on-street parking. The effects of realigning Westbard Avenue to flow directly into an already-congested River Road should also be studied. In addition, the Sketch Plan does not contain sufficient data to demonstrate that a proposed Westbard Avenue shuttle to nearby Metro stations will be sufficient to alleviate traffic congestion associated with the proposed project.

As noted above, a formal traffic study has yet to be undertaken with respect to the Sketch Plan’s proposed redesign of Westbard Avenue and provision of on-site parking for 2,079 to 4,013 vehicles. In addition, this formal traffic study is needed to prepare an accurate environmental assessment of the proposed development, as required under Montgomery County statute, to evaluate the proposed project’s carbon footprint, and impact on greenhouse gas emissions and vehicle miles traveled. The Council’s failure to conduct an environmental assessment during the *illegal* Sector Plan process, as required by law, is one of the legal deficiencies cited in the *SaveWestbard* lawsuit.

In short, the slipshod treatment of environmental matters in the Westbard matter is disturbing. Bill Turque's recent article in [The Washington Post \(Metro 10/13/16\)](#) notes that Mr. Roger Berliner and Ms. Nancy Navarro have proposed a bill to divest the County employees' pension fund of any stocks invested in fossil-fuel companies. In the article, the Councilmembers reference the effects of climate change and state that the county "should not be investing in the very companies that undermine our commitment to sustainability," citing past Council bills and resolutions to limit carbon emissions and to promote clean energy. These lofty goals should have been addressed and applied during the *illegal* Westbard Sector Plan process. See [Plaintiff Stinson Letter to MoCo Planning Board, dated Oct. 15, 2016](#).

4. Utility Lines and Parking should be Buried (90.88% agreement). 90.88% of survey respondents agree with the statement that "All utility lines and multi-story parking should be underground for reliability and aesthetic reasons."

*****Utility Lines.** Above-grade utility poles are outdated, aesthetically displeasing, less durable than buried lines, and thoroughly inconsistent with the stated Sector Plan goal to provide presumably pleasant places for "outdoor recreation, gathering and relaxation." Further, the use of above-grade utility poles is antithetical to the design excellence strategy to which Equity One has committed.

*****Parking.** The proposed multi-story above-ground parking lot infiltrates the Willett Stream buffer zone and the proposed greenbelt area, ruins our open vistas, and is a detriment to the environment. The proposed structured parking garage is not aesthetically pleasing and it is decidedly incompatible not only with Equity One's commitment to design excellence but also with the open space and sustainability goals outlined in the *illegal* Westbard Sector Plan. The disrespect for the environment is profound, and we refer you to the discussion of environmental problems inherent in this proposed Sketch Plan as addressed in the [Comments of the Little Falls Watershed Alliance, dated Aug. 17, 2016](#).

5. Possible Cemeteries should be Protected (84.81% agreement). 84.81% of survey respondents agree with the statement that "To ensure appropriate site design, an archaeological study and, if needed, a reburial plan should be completed before the sketch plan is approved."

A complete archaeological study should be undertaken to protect the possible desecration of African-American cemeteries. Credible local history accounts indicate that the cemeteries exist(ed) in/near/around the Westbard redevelopment site. Pursuant to Maryland Burial Law, no new building should be allowed in this area unless and until a formal study substantiates or debunks the existence of the presumed graves. If the graves exist, then proper human respect and decency demand their re-burial.

6. No New Buildings in the Willett Buffer Zone (91.44% agreement). 91.44% of survey respondents agree with the statement that "No new building construction should be allowed in the Willett Branch stream buffer zone."

[As recommended by LFWA](#), and as discussed above in *Point No. 4, Parking*, no new building construction should be permitted within the Willett Branch stream buffer zone,

including the building planned for the Bowlmor site and the proposed structured parking facility behind the HOC building. These structures are incompatible with the restoration of the Willett Branch, with the creation of a public greenbelt, and with the sustainability goals outlined in the *illegal* Westbard Sector Plan. Moreover, new building construction in the stream buffer zone compromises stormwater management objectives and reduces the areas available for wildlife habitat and public green space.

In addition to the results of the Community Survey, and the discussion of the survey's data points, above, *SaveWestbard* hereby adopts and incorporates herein by reference the [Comments of Westbard resident, Leanne Tobias, dated Sept. 30, 2016.](#)

Conclusion:

The [October, 2016 Community Survey](#) conducted by *SaveWestbard* demonstrates that Westbard area residents are **overwhelmingly dissatisfied** with:

- The Sketch Plan's reliance on excessively dense/tall building massing incompatible with surrounding development, including residential areas. **(93.37%)**
- The Sketch Plan's failure to provide sufficient public open space. **(94.75%)**
- The Sketch Plan's failure to sufficiently address traffic congestion issues, including the effects of the proposed redesign of Westbard Avenue. **(93.65%)**
- The Sketch Plan's failure to place all utility lines and on-site parking underground. **(90.88%)**
- The Sketch Plan's failure to ascertain or disprove the existence of possible cemeteries on the proposed development site and, if needed, to propose a reburial plan, as required under Maryland law. **(84.81%)**
- The Sketch Plan's recommendation to construct new buildings in the Willett Branch stream buffer zone. **(91.44%)**

Residents were told, repeatedly, by you, our Montgomery County government officials, that Sector Plans are never fully built-out; however, that is exactly what is on-tap here. The proposed Sketch Plan's deficiencies, as discussed herein, demand redress and we submit that this Sketch Plan requires a serious dismantling and re-working. In addition to challenging the legality of the Westbard Sector Plan, *SaveWestbard* believes that neither the Sector Plan's content, nor the process adopted to approve it, gives appropriate weight to the expressed needs and desires of Westbard area residents.

We note, finally, that Equity One's Mr. Brown thinks the proposed Sketch Plan will "greatly enhance the Westbard area of the County." We disagree. We did not ask that our suburban community be urbanized in favor of a New York developer.

The comments herein do not constitute SaveWestbard's acquiescence to or acceptance of the legal validity of the Westbard Sector Plan or of the proposed Equity One Sketch Plan.

In Solidarity with the Overwhelming Majority of Westbard Area Residents, as Substantiated by Two Community Surveys, [one in April, 2016](#), and [one in October, 2016](#), I remain, most cordially,

Patricia E. Kolesar

Patricia E. Kolesar for SaveWestbard, Inc.

5508 Jordan Road

Bethesda, MD 20816

301-503-4109 (mobile)

From: June Humbert
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: EquityOne Sketch Plan is Deeply Flawed
Date: Tuesday, October 18, 2016 8:45:38 AM

Dear Chairman Casey Anderson,

The pending lawsuit speaks for itself. This Sketch Plan draws upon the illegal and void Westbard Sector Plan and thus it has no merit in and of itself.

The overwhelming majority of Westbard-area residents OPPOSE this massive re-development and urbanization project. Westbard-area residents requested an updated shopping center, with a reasonable amount of new density (580 new units). We will continue to oppose this out-sized project as it is unreasonable for our suburban community; we have confidence in our causes of action, as outlined in the pending lawsuit, SaveWestbard Plaintiffs v. MoCo County Council (filed Sept. 19, 2016).

Nevertheless, in order to protect residents' rights in this matter, I offer the following comments:

1. Too Much Density. This has been a common theme since Day 1. Cut this development down, drastically. Our schools and roads cannot handle the stress of this enormous development.
2. Too Little Public Open Space: 1/3 of an acre for the Civic Green? That's rather insignificant for the amount of density proposed. The entirety of the proposed public use area is excruciatingly tiny and wholly inadequate for the proposed density.
3. Westbard Avenue should not have street parking; we're not interested in an off-peak "Bethesda Avenue" traffic pattern. Further, due to the expected traffic congestion, a full, impartial, and detailed traffic analysis should be undertaken immediately.
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Residents were told, repeatedly, by you, our MoCo government officials, that Sector Plans are never fully built-out; however, that is exactly what is on-tap here.

Mr. Brown thinks the Sketch Plan will "greatly enhance the Westbard area of the County." We disagree. We did not ask that our suburban community be urbanized in favor of a New York developer.

The comments herein do not constitute acquiescence to or acceptance of the Sketch Plan.

Regards,
June Humbert
4901 Scarsdale Rd
Bethesda, MD 20816

From: Adrienne Deming
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: EquityOne Sketch Plan is Deeply Flawed
Date: Tuesday, October 18, 2016 8:42:55 AM

Dear Chairman Casey Anderson,

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The comments herein do not constitute acquiescence to or acceptance of the Sketch Plan.

Regards,
Adrienne Deming
5325 Westbard Ave
Bethesda, MD 20816

From: jr Gray
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: EquityOne Sketch Plan is Deeply Flawed
Date: Tuesday, October 18, 2016 6:59:21 AM

Dear Chairman Casey Anderson,

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The comments herein do not constitute acquiescence to or acceptance of the Sketch Plan.

Regards,
jr Gray
5109 Baltan Rd
Bethesda, MD 20816

From: gf4763@verizon.net
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: EquityOne Sketch Plan is Deeply Flawed
Date: Tuesday, October 18, 2016 6:37:38 AM

Dear Chairman Casey Anderson,

The pending lawsuit speaks for itself. This Sketch Plan draws upon the illegal and void Westbard Sector Plan and thus it has no merit in and of itself.

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Regards,

5719 Newington Rd
Bethesda, MD 20816

From: Pamela Mertz
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: EquityOne Sketch Plan is Deeply Flawed
Date: Tuesday, October 18, 2016 2:48:02 AM

Dear Chairman Casey Anderson,

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The comments herein do not constitute acquiescence to or acceptance of the Sketch Plan.

Regards,
Pamela Mertz
5100 Baltimore Ave
Bethesda, MD 20816

From: Gianne McNeil
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: EquityOne Sketch Plan is Deeply Flawed
Date: Tuesday, October 18, 2016 2:33:44 AM

Dear Chairman Casey Anderson,

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The comments herein do not constitute acquiescence to or acceptance of the Sketch Plan.

Regards,
Gianne McNeil
6606 Rannoch Ct
Bethesda, MD 20817

From: Monica Goldberg
To: [Marcolin, John](#)
Subject: Westbard development
Date: Tuesday, November 08, 2016 5:14:27 AM

Hello -- I'm a resident of the area and wanted to let you know I support the development moving forward. You all of course need to keep an eye on environmental impacts etc and I believe you're doing that, but some of the concerns raised by some seem overheated. We need additional housing in this area and I hope there will be as much low-income set aside as possible. Thanks for your work. Best,
Monica Goldberg, 5207 Marlyn Drive, Bethesda, MD 20816

From: Edwin Gordon
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: EquityOne Sketch Plan is Deeply Flawed
Date: Tuesday, October 18, 2016 11:51:51 AM

Dear Chairman Casey Anderson,

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Residents were told, repeatedly, by you, our MoCo government officials, that Sector Plans are never fully built-out; however, that is exactly what is on-tap here.

Mr. Brown thinks the Sketch Plan will "greatly enhance the Westbard area of the County." We disagree. We did not ask that our suburban community be urbanized in favor of a New York developer.

The comments herein do not constitute acquiescence to or acceptance of the Sketch Plan.

Regards,
Edwin Gordon
5821 Osceola Rd
Bethesda, MD 20816

From: Patricia Johnson
To: [Kronenberg, Robert](#)
Cc: [Marcolin, John](#); [Wright, Gwen](#); [Jenny Sue Dunner](#); [Tara Primis](#)
Subject: Re: A question about the Westbard Sector and the culvert on Manor Care site
Date: Thursday, October 27, 2016 6:12:56 PM

Mr. Kronenberg: Thank you for your response. We in Kenwood and members of the CCCFH are very interested in why E1 is proposing this and what impact it will have on the Tributary. Please keep me informed as to what you discover. Thank you again. Best, Pat Johnson (Kenwood Committee)

On Oct 27, 2016, at 1:31 PM, Kronenberg, Robert
<robert.kronenberg@montgomeryplanning.org> wrote:

Ms. Johnson,

We have not met with the E1 team to specifically discuss the Manor Care site but they did talk to us about moving the culvert further north ("west") along River Road by approximately 100 feet. It appears that moving the culvert buries the storm drain pipe along River Road and possibly moves the stream buffer to the Kenwood Tributary north of where it currently exists. I have a discussion scheduled with my team about this today to understand the implications of what they are proposing to the stream buffer, tributary and proposed development on the site.

Robert A. Kronenberg | Chief, Area 1
The Montgomery County Planning Department
8787 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
Robert.Kronenberg@montgomeryplanning.org
T 301 495-2187 F 301 495-1304

From: Patricia Johnson [<mailto:pdjohnson01@yahoo.com>]
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 11:43 AM
To: Marcolin, John <john.marcolin@montgomeryplanning.org>
Cc: Kronenberg, Robert <robert.kronenberg@montgomeryplanning.org>; Wright, Gwen <gwen.wright@montgomeryplanning.org>; Jenny Sue <jennysuedailey@aol.com>; Tara Primis <tbprimis@me.com>
Subject: A question about the Westbard Sector and the culvert on Manor Care site

Dear Mr. Marcolin, I was at a Kenwood Citizens Assoc. meeting last Tuesday evening. Bill Brown from Equity One made a presentation re. plans for the Westbard Sector. In the meeting he mentioned plans to "move the culvert on the Manor Care site to the North along River Road". We were interested in knowing why E1 wanted to do this? Also we wanted to know how far "north" this culvert will be moved (I think the term should be "west" if they are planning to move it in the direction of Potomac). Another question we have is what would the result be when the culvert is moved? Would it impact the Kenwood tributary? Could you give us more information on this? Thank you. Pat Johnson (Kenwood Committee for River Road/Westbard)

Springfield Civic Association
P.O. Box 644
Glen Echo, MD 20812
October 29, 2016

Ms. Gwen Wright
Director of Planning
M-NCPPC
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Mr. Michael F. Riley
Director of Parks
M-NCPPC
9500 Brunett Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20901

Dear Ms. Wright and Mr. Riley:

On behalf of the Springfield Civic Association, I am providing our initial concerns regarding Equity One's revised sketch plans for its property in the Westbard Sector.

The Sketch Plan over delivers development and under delivers traffic flow (vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle), and green space. This Sketch Plan fails to hit the appropriate balance that will benefit both the new occupants of the area as well as those of us who are long-term residents of adjacent communities who recognize the shortcomings of the current Westbard area.

Overdelivers

With respect to the Springfield community, the density is too high. In particular, the Manor Care site has too many townhomes surrounding the Springfield property at 5507 Westbard Avenue. Not only are townhomes to the right of this single-family home (if facing its front door), but there are also townhomes behind it, effectively eliminating any privacy for the homeowner. Equity One has provided a buffer, a community park, for single-family homes in our community at the end of Ridgefield Road. Why is there's no buffer for this property on Westbard Avenue?

In addition, the townhomes behind this home are well within the 100-foot stream valley buffer for the Kenwood Tributary. Environmentally, this is unacceptable. These townhomes should not be built in the stream valley buffer.

Finally, when the County Council approved the Sector Plan it was noted that a separate ZTA would be taken up regarding rooftop terraces. That has not occurred. Terraces, especially those with permanent structures such as walls or grills have been a means by which developers have gotten around the heights established in the sector plan. The height limit for the townhouses on the Manor Care site is 45 feet and that should be inclusive of any rooftop terrace.

Density for all of the Equity One property is too high. Equity One needs to be asked how they determined the extra 10 feet of height for the HOC buildings in front of the Westwood Towers HOC building, and the extra 12 feet for the massive apartment building at the Bowlmor/Citgo site along Westbard Avenue.

The mission of the HOC is, “to provide affordable housing and supportive services that enhance the lives of low- and moderate-income families and individuals throughout Montgomery County. . . .” (<http://www.hocmc.org/about-hoc/about-us.html>) The two buildings that are being built in front of the current HOC building (Westwood Towers) are expected to have 30 percent affordable housing (p.111, Westbard Sector Plan, Approved and Adopted July 2016, Resolution 18-471) despite the Council requirement that all housing in the Sector Plan include 15 percent affordable housing, which is 2.5 percent above the 12.5 percent required in the zoning code. Since the goal of the HOC is to provide more MPDUs than is required by county statute, it appears that Equity One is taking amenity credits for what is expected of the HOC. In addition, although Equity One currently owns this property, HOC has mentioned its intent to buy this site within the next year. If that is the case, Equity One is seeking to locate some of its MPDUs on a site it may not own at the time of construction. (See SK10, Amenity/Benefit Phasing Plan, p. 111, Revised Equity One Sketch Plan) Consequently, Equity One should not receive amenities credit for housing provided by the HOC and the height limit on the HOC buildings should remain at 75 feet.

Affordable housing for the entire Equity One project needs to be dispersed throughout. It appears that given the added height Equity One has requested atop the HOC buildings and the building on the Bowlmor/Citgo site, they are concentrating MPDUs for all their development sites in these buildings. That is not acceptable. The County Council agreed that there could be some “modest” variations from 15 percent among each of the Equity One projects (p.111, Westbard Sector Plan, Approved and Adopted July 2016, Resolution 18-471.) “Modest” must be clarified for Equity One.

Underdelivers

Equity One appears to be backing away from realigning Westbard Avenue and this is unacceptable to the Springfield community. In the original Sketch Plan (p. 91) and in the revised Sketch Plan (p. 92), Equity One has included the following, “The Application also includes as ‘Option B’ in the Appendix the retention of the current configuration of Westbard Avenue, in the event that considerations beyond the control of the Applicant, such as may be contained in the comments from permitting agencies and utilities, render construction impractical or inconsistent with development timing.” SK-14 (p. 118) shows this “option.”

Westbard Avenue must be realigned. This is NOT an option and “Option B” must be eliminated from the Sketch Plan. Here’s why: Equity One had two years to speak out if there are any **major** obstacles to realigning Westbard Avenue. During that time they could have hired an independent consultant to give them an assessment as to the feasibility, practicality and cost.

The suggestion that Westbard Avenue be realigned was first brought up publicly in November 2014 at the Westbard charrettes. Through that fall, this realignment was not questioned. Neither did Equity One express concerns about it during the Planning Board hearings or review by the County Council Planning, Housing and Economic Development Committee in 2015. Any concerns Equity One had about realignment were not expressed in 2016 prior to the County Council approval of the Sector Plan. Now that the reality of the cost of undergrounding the overhead utilities and moving other utilities such as water and sewage lines has hit them, they are backing out of this consideration.

The realignment of Westbard Avenue is a major benefit to Equity One and to the Springfield community. For Equity One, realignment of Westbard Avenue provides an entrance to the new community they will be developing and it gives those from surrounding communities' direct access to Equity One's new retail. For the Springfield community, it will reduce cut-through traffic on Ridgefield Road, while it protects the 21 single-family and 3-townhouse homeowners on Westbard Avenue (between Ridgefield Road and River Road) from additional truck and auto traffic. Without realignment, vehicular traffic is bound to increase on that segment of road, significantly degrading the quality of life and the property values for those homeowners.

Not realigning Westbard Avenue also puts into question the zoning height and density given to the Westwood II site. Additional height and density were given to this property because with the realignment of Westbard Avenue and with much of the property within the 100 foot stream valley buffer the buildable site is limited. "A commercial FAR of 1.5 with height limited to 75 feet is recommended due to site constraints and the proposed realignment of Ridgefield Road and Westbard Avenue." (Resolution No 18-471, p.128, Westbard Sector Plan)

Green Space in general is lacking. The Sketch Plan touts how Equity One "proposes providing approximately 10 percent of the property, or 90,689 square feet as public open space. The centerpiece of this open space is an approximately 1/3 acre civic green provided on the Westwood I Shopping Center site in accordance with the Sector Plan." (p. 92 Revised Sketch Plan). If Equity One was providing 10 percent greenspace by chopping up part of the current blacktop, planting grass and without redeveloping its property, it might be acceptable. Instead, 10 percent is pathetic.

Westbard now is a heat island thanks to its acres of blacktop. Equity One is not decreasing the heat island effect since instead of blacktop, there will be numerous buildings of multiple stories. Given the number of units Equity One plans on building and the number of additional residents anticipated, 10 percent of greenspace is a paltry amount.

In addition, the 1/3 acre civic green is hardly a "centerpiece" if it includes a commercial (SK-2, p.100, SK-9, p.109) building. This building also blocks a pedestrian's line of site to the larger commercial building proposed at the southern end of the current Westwood I property. Consequently, aside from reducing this small amount of greenspace, this small commercial building is unacceptable from a visual and safety perspective.

The revised sketch plan gives some mention of the Willett Branch (p 86, pp 90-91), which in the original sketch plan was completely omitted. However, none of the sketch plans were revised to indicate property that Equity One will be donating to help develop the Willett Branch Greenway. This includes the following sketch designs: SK3, public open space (page 104); SK8 & SK9, massing studies (pp. 109, 110); SK15, massing alternate open space (p. 122). SK16, location of the Willett Branch Stream and

Kenwood Tributary (p.123) provides the very basics -- the stream centerline and the developer's proposed buffer, which is considerably less than the 100 feet that are recommended by state and local guidelines. It is incomprehensible that Equity One was unaware of the environmental restrictions when they bought the property from Capital Properties and therefore it is incomprehensible that they have not included the stream bed and its buffer on each of the appropriate sketch plans.

The Springfield community firmly supports protecting the 100 foot stream valley buffer for the Willett Branch. We also want to protect the 100 foot stream valley buffer along the Kenwood Tributary, which is adjacent to property within our community.

Some of the private open space should be public open space, offering walking and biking paths to the Willett Branch Greenway. SK3, the Public Open Space sketch (p. 104, Equity One Revised Sketch Plan), indicates both private and public greenspace. There are several areas where private space should be public, allowing for pedestrians and bicyclists to access the Willett Branch Greenway and conversely providing Greenway and CCT users' access to the Westbard shopping area. For example:

1. The corner of the Westwood II property where the realigned Westbard Avenue meets River Road, should allow for public entrance into the Willett Branch Greenway both by pedestrians and bicyclists. Instead, SK3 shows pedestrians and bicyclists going to River Road and presumably to the Capital Crescent Trail.
2. Between American Plant and the Roof Center the Sector Plan says, "The property leased by the Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC) on the east side of Westbard Avenue has the potential to act as the southwestern terminus of a connection between Westbard Avenue and River Road. This connection, either a pedestrian link or a vehicular/pedestrian link between the Westbard Avenue District and River Road (at parcels 131 and 133), will create synergy between these two retail nodes. It would also serve as a gateway to the naturalized Willett Branch stream valley, providing easy access from both River Road and Westbard Avenue." (Resolution No.: 18-471, p. 133) Instead, the path in the sketch plan does not provide "easy access." It shows a detour around one of the two HOC buildings, not a direct path between the Westbard Avenue and River Road commercial districts.
3. Between the two new HOC buildings that are to the left of Westwood Towers, the existing HOC building (if facing the building), there should be a path to the Willett Branch. This is clearly blocked by a proposed parking garage behind the HOC. This parking garage should not be allowed because a) it is well within the 100 foot stream bed buffer of the Willett Branch; b) although not yet confirmed, it may be the site of an African-American cemetery. The grounds need to be examined to see if there are any human remains and if so, it should not be further desecrated; and c) any edifice built along the stream should be facing towards it and enlivening the action along this property. A parking garage would not enliven or welcome people to the greenway.
4. Between the new HOC building and the new building on the Bowlmor/Citgo site Equity One has placed another small commercial building. The walkway between the HOC building and this commercial building appears to be an invitation for a crime. This space could be put to better use by being public green space and offering yet another entranceway to the Willett Branch Greenway.

These are four areas where pathways surrounded by greenery could reach off the Willett Branch Greenway and descend directly into the Westbard retail and residential area, linking a natural resource with residential and commercial development.

If Equity One developed the improved pathways mentioned above, the area might also need some wayfinding signage, for which they've assigned themselves five amenity points. Given the sketch plan they've presented, there is no indication of alternate pedestrian or bike routes to Westbard Avenue and therefore these amenity points should not be awarded.

Equity One's Sketch Plan for their Westbard property lacks vision. Equity One is acknowledged to have expertise in developing shopping malls. Their partners, EYA and the Montgomery County Housing Opportunities Commission have expertise in developing housing units. Consequently, Equity One has developed a sketch plan that reflects these areas of expertise. Westbard, however, could and should be a model community that balances retail and new housing with the natural environment along the Willett Branch. The stream and the new retail could both serve as focal points to a new community while drawing in residents from the single family home, townhouse and high rise communities already in existence. Instead, even the revised Sketch Plan is a severe disappointment and should not be accepted by the Planning or Parks departments.

Sincerely,

Phyllis Edelman

President, Springfield Civic Assn.

Cc: John Marcolin
Susanne Paul